

**THE LOVERS OF THE WOODS**  
**By W H Boardman**



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THE LOVERS OF THE WOODS





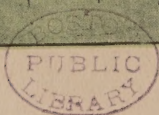








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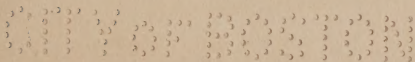
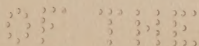
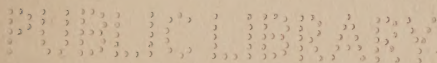
THE LOVERS OF  
THE WOODS

*By*  
WILLIAM H. BOARDMAN

NEW YORK  
McCLURE, PHILLIPS & CO.  
M C M I

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NOTES TO



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## INTRODUCTION

**W**OODCRAFT is a like art in all the forests from Canada to either coast. The only important differences are in the ways of transportation. We go to the woods to do with our own hands those things which we have been accustomed to have done for us, and to wait upon ourselves, sometimes, just enough to see how it seems. It is an essential part of the pleasure of catching trout to feel that we are by our own labor earning food. We sleep without complaining on the beds that we have made, and sometimes try to eat the food that we have cooked. We taste, somewhat daintily, the ameliorated hardships of primitive living and, knowing our own shortcomings, we learn forbearance.

The sportsman who takes seriously his vacation in the woods has satisfaction in learning how



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to live properly and hunt and fish successfully. It adds to his self-respect and self-reliance to know how to cook and camp and pack ; to use his legs and boats and horses ; to get out of trouble and to keep out of trouble. While acquiring these accomplishments he has, if he is a good man, become sated with killing. He has had abundant proof of his skill in approaching game and in shooting straight, of knowledge of fish habits and handiness in taking them, and he does not want to kill anything any more unless he needs it in his business. If he is unworthy he keeps on killing ; if he is a limited person his activities end and he sets up for a sage ; but if he is wise his accomplishment of being able to use his eyes is set to nobler purposes, and he learns that it is a never-ending joy to win acquaintance with the timber trees and forest shrubs and plants ; to learn how the animals live and think ; to know well and understand the splendid simple men whom a lifetime in the woods sometimes produces ; and, per-



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haps best of all, he finds the pictures in the woods.

The sportsman who has studied this higher woodcraft pities, and writes for and talks for, his over-worked friend who comes to each summer solstice longing for an outing and aimlessly wavering among advertisements and suggestions.

An idle vacation is not the best rest for the body or for the mind. It is a poor diversion, this turning from a full life to an empty one, and there is little rest in it. That which is known to some engineers as the "fatigue of metals," a supposed loss of strength due to often-repeated small strains no one of which is a breaking strain, is not cured by a disuse of the metal. An outing needs an occupation, a change of work. It need not be strenuous, but it should be a subject for diverting thought and reading during the winter; one that makes the vacation longed for; that strengthens the muscles by use and stimulates the mind with daily accessions



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of knowledge. A changed occupation that brings a daily appetite and has a daily motive is what most men need to help them rest, and this the Woods always yield to the seeker who comes to them in the right spirit and with good guidance.



THE LOVERS  
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I







# THE LOVERS OF THE WOODS

## LOST

**A**T the edge of the evening Billy Drew arrived. Although it was in the heart of the Adirondack forest, miles away from any known living place of human beings ; although he came into camp by the creek valley where no trail existed ; and although there was no food in his small pack-basket ; nevertheless he came to the camp-fire with a strolling gait and a casual, unconcerned salute which might have hid from a less expert woodsman than John the fact that he had been very much lost, and was tired and hungry. John was cooking a supper of bacon, trout, and tea. It was not an elaborate bill of fare, and his working kit was a two-quart pail and a frying-pan, but the quantities were enormous and the quality the best in the world. Everything was



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clean. The supper-table was the leathery surface of the inner side of a sheet of spruce bark. The room was ample, limited only by the trees that glowed in the light of the evening fire. There was a dainty neatness and precision in his way of camp-fire cooking. Before the bacon was fully done it had been taken from the frying-pan and transferred to a tin plate set near the coals, so that the process of keeping it hot would just complete its cooking by the time the trout were ready to be lifted from the same frying-pan. A moment before this the boiling water had been poured on the tea and these three converging lines of supply met at a point, the point of highest efficiency for gratifying an appetite.

It was the work of a master, and Billy admired it in spite of its deliberation. He was well-equipped for criticism and his admiration was a tribute, all the more because the enforced waiting for enjoying the hospitality that had been heartily offered to him was an agony. It



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was a whole day since he had eaten his last mouthful, and it had been a day of work and anxiety as well as of hunger. He had nearly exhausted his stock of woods' lore in trying to orient himself and find a way out, until he tried the last resort and doggedly followed a winding creek through miles of alder beds and black-ash swamps, sure of only one thing, that water runs down hill and comes to where people live. His whole instinct was to hide his terrible experience, at least for the present, while the memory of it was a bitter mortification. Later, perhaps, it would be a story, but now he was ashamed of his carelessness.

The realization of being lost comes suddenly to the traveler who is winning his way gayly and carelessly through the woods. An expected landmark does not appear; or the blazed line is lost; or the water in a brook is found to be running the wrong way; or the northing is lost. There is an overwhelming paralysis of the thinking powers and a childish impulse to



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scream ; a feeling that there is not a moment to spare, of suffocation, as if one were under water and life depended on getting out immediately. The untrained man hurries. His pack is suddenly heavy and his rifle is a useless toy. He is afraid, as he climbs over logs, through windfalls, swamps, and burnt ground, to turn a yard from what he imagines to be a straight line. Nervous tension is bad for the wind and he is soon breathless. Then his character develops : the weak man longs for help and calls for it, by shooting or screaming ; the strong man grimly resolves to help himself, to stop and sum up the situation with all the information he has, or can gather by close observation, and then go slow and not far.

The trained woodsman calmly fills his pipe and sits down to think about it. He has no anxiety about himself, for he knows that he can live many days in the woods with only small discomforts. His pride may be touched or he may be missing an appointment, or caus-



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ing needless anxiety to others, but he knows that he is in no present danger and does not want to be helped out ; his whole training and habit of mind lead him to help himself. If he needs to know a point-of-compass before he can determine his direction, he can wait for it — for the stars at night, or for the sun next day or some other day. Perhaps he will idly try for it by studying the mosses on rocks and hard-wood trees, but this is for a diversion, not for a reliance.

Usually he does not need to know his north-  
ing, for he goes by the “lay of the land,” and he has not taken a step in a strange country without knowing something of the watershed. The smallest possible amount of casual or general information of where the water goes is expanded by every rod that he travels. He never loses faith in the law of gravity. It is beautiful to tramp with a woodsman in country that is new to him. He drinks in the topography. He is like a *débutante*, exhilarated by



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new acquaintances and glowing with inspiration from new friends, but, unlike her, he is not doomed to disappointment. The ridges and valleys stay. They are faithful to the end and will guide him when he is lost.

The supper rested and soothed Billy. He remembered now that through the long days of wandering he had often struggled with hysterical feelings and he could easily understand how insanity comes to a man who is lost. He wondered if either John or the pale young sportsman whom John was guiding suspected his condition. The truth was that after John had quietly asked him one question, "Come from Horn Lake?" and he had answered, "Yes," the old woodsman had guessed out the whole story and could have told it with reasonable accuracy.

The simple camp-kit was cleaned and stowed and the night fire was lighted. John disappeared in the back end of the low bark camp and returned with a blanket which he dropped



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in a half careless, half motherly fashion on the pale young man's shoulders.

"I guess, Mr. Hardy, you'll do better to set on this log where the smoke won't reach you."

The young man moved and established himself comfortably, and at the same time noted that the guest was happier. He was mellowed by his pipe and some borrowed tobacco. He was content. Absolute comfort for body and mind is perhaps not the keenest enjoyment, but it is near it, it is worth working for, and it can be had in the woods. It is not simply a comparative condition, a relief from misery, or a measurement of the distance from discomfort. With a conscience at ease, the appetites gratified, the senses charmed by the beauty of the woods, and with an inspiring consciousness that there are lots of things to do, the healthy woodsman can sit on a log and be very happy and have comfort. He can have it in rain or in sunshine, night or day. "Flannel is flannel, wet or dry," and wet clothes are not



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necessarily uncomfortable, although they become so after a while.

In driving logs down a river in March, a crew of thirty men are in and out of the cold water during the day and sleep in wet woollen clothes many nights without developing a case of rheumatism or of any other sickness. A healthy, temperate woodsman does not become rheumatic, and surely a common belief that this disease comes from pure water is an error. The sportsman does not get it from wading the stream ; the temperate log-drivers and lumbermen never get it ; but the whiskey-drinker that gets drunk and lies out, has rheumatism and " lays it " to the water.

Comfort needs reasonably good health, capable of being made perfect health by right living, earnestness of purpose, and a capacity for getting tired. With bones that ache a little, not too much, a little added knowledge of Nature's laws as a result of the day's experience, the best food, the best cooking, a safe roof, a bright fire,



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a balsam-bough bed, and a partner that is a lover of the woods, a reasonable man is content. All the exquisite refinements and amusements of the most highly civilized spot on earth can do no more for him.

Hardy had neither seen nor read, as John's keen eyes had read, the manifest signs of Billy's late experience. It was possibly unconscious cerebration which led him to ask :

"Billy, did you ever get lost in the woods?"

"Yes, once," said Billy, cautiously. "It was the first week I come in. Cy Harmer had a contract up to Wakely Dam and he left word for me. His wife —"

Hardy rather unnecessarily interrupted at this point to mention that he was acquainted with Cy Harmer.

"No, you don't know Cy. He ain't round here now. You know Andy Harmer, his brother-in-law, and Cy has n't any use for him. Cy's wife was up to the Dam too."

"Hold on a minute, Billy. Rather peculiar,



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is n't it, that these two men had the same name and were only brothers-in-law ? ”

“ Seems so, yes. The bottom fact is they begun reg'lar brothers and stayed so till they both knowed the Bascom girls. Sairey was the youngest. She was likely and smart and they both wanted her. Maria was sharp-faced and red-headed, but somehow she stayed in the game all one winter, till Andy Harmer drawed Sairey, and Cy, jest to keep from bein' laughed at, took up with Maria and tried to look cheerful. He felt it though, and 'lowed that from that day he would n't have Andy for no nearer 'na brother-in-law, and he did n't. Maria was a good worker and she was up to the Dam, doin' the cookin', when I come.

“ I got there, say a Wednesday, and worked the ox-team haulin' in hemlocks for squarin' for the flume timbers, till come Saturday night. Sunday mornin' we fixed up a little and turned the cattle loose to peck and rest up while we sot around. There come a sugar snow in the after-



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noon and we built a fire in the stove and sot there till Cy went out to see to the cattle and could n't find 'em. It was good trackin' snow and we both started out. We follered 'em and follered 'em till, 'fore we knowed it, night shet down on us like a jack-knife.

“ We had n't noticed where we were goin' ; had n't looked at a thing but the tracks, and I 'm a-tellin' you, young gentleman, that is a mighty keerless thing to do in these woods. We back tracked a ways till we come to a creek, and then we gave it up. It turned off cold, and we had our Sunday clothes on and no blankets and nothin' to eat. Of course I had matches, and we whittled some kindlin' off'n a riven pine and got some dry stuff together and built a fire alongside a spruce log until the log was well a-goin', and let me tell you, young gentleman, never do that as long 's you live. Then we lay down alongside and went to sleep. When one side got hot and the other side cold, we 'd half wake up and roll over and warm up even.



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When both sides got cold we 'd naturally in our sleep roll a little nearer the log. A fired spruce log is snappy. Better find a maple if you ever have to lay out. We woke up at daylight, stiff and cold and hungry. Our Sunday clothes had a thousand holes burned in 'em. They looked like gill nets. I said so to Cy and that made him think of fish, an' of course he had a hook and line in his pocket, an' he went to the creek and ketched a mess of trout.

"Now Cy always was peculiar about trout. He could n't eat 'em no way except fried. I tried to argue him into saying biled would do, 'cause of course I had no grease to fry 'em in; but he would n't hev it; said he spleened against anything but fried. So I just gave up to him and fried 'em — in water. I told him I 'd done it just to humor him, and he seemed satisfied, but he 'lowed afterward to Maria that, as he looked back, they seemed to taste for all the world as if they 'd been biled."

The young man laughed appreciatively, while



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John, without a word of comment, arose, and putting his foot against the front of the green birch fire, deftly pushed the burning sticks closer to each other. The blaze sprang out and lighted the amphitheatre of balsams. There was a long silence, finally broken by Hardy :

“ When you get ready, Billy, you can tell us how far you had wandered from camp, how you got back, and what became of the oxen.”

“ About eighty rod,” said Billy, “ and the oxen was back.”

“ Circled,” said John.

“ I have heard of that,” said Hardy, “ that is, I have heard that no man naturally travels in the woods, off the trail, in a straight line; that it is hard to keep from curving to the right or the left.”

“ It is hard,” said John. “ When the sun is shinin’, any body can walk straight, for you steer by your shadow. On a cloudy day, or in the dark, if you have n’t forgot your compass, as you generally have, you can look at that once



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in a while and hold a pretty good line, but you need to learn to trust your compass, and not fight it.

“ A good while ago I went out in the afternoon to put out six dogs for a party on Upper Plains. I wanted to wait till the next mornin', but they wanted' the biggest buck in the woods the first day. I had four young dogs on chain and two old ones free. The dogs dragged me wherever they wanted to, when they happened to pull together, and at other times they girdled trees and tore the witch hopples with the chains. I let the last dog go on a fresh track and then started for the river. I did n't know much about that country then, but of course I had n't forgot that water runs down-hill, and I knew the lay of the land and that all the main ridges run northeast. So I kep' a-quarterin' on 'em, workin' down-hill, a-thinkin' I was goin' plumb north. Fact was, I 'd been lookin' for tracks and rasslin' with the dogs, and they'd led me over the river divide without my knowin' it, and



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if I 'd kep' a-goin' I 'd 'a' found the Mohawk, the way the Injins used to. I 'd been careless, and carelessness is the worst fault a man can have, except lyin' about what he 's done.

“After walkin' awhile I got suspicious and looked at my compass and found that the needle pointed exactly wrong way. 'Course, I did n't think that was queer, because I had four heavy dog-chains wrapped on my belt ; so I kep' on the bearin' that I knew was due north, for of course I 'd strike the river that way. It was beginnin' dark and I was gettin' tired when I looked at the compass again. The chains were holdin' the needle wrong-end-to just as before, so I lit my pipe and stopped to think about it. Pretty soon I got a little sense and took off my chains and put the compass on a stump four rod off, and it pointed wrong way just the same. So I give up fightin' and went wrong way and come in all right.

“If you only want to travel straight, that 's easy, when you learn it. Keep your eye more



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or less on peculiar trees far ahead and hold your line. When you have to turn out for wind-falls or swamps, allow for it and get back on your line."

"But, John, why is it that a man naturally circles? When he wobbles and varies, I should think the errors would tend to neutralize each other and keep him nearly straight, or at least sometimes straight."

"He does, that's all I know, and I don't rightly know why. I used to think it was on the part of the side-hills, because a man naturally turns to easy goin', but I give that up. Last year a fellow came up here and showed me a pattern of his head that he said his hatter had made for him with a machine. It wa'n't the shape of an egg; it was bulged out on one side more than on the other, and I said, 'Man alive, you don't claim that your head is lop-sided like that?' And he said it certainly was so; that every man's head leaned out, one side or the other, front or back. 'If that's so, it accounts for circlin'."



## CHILDREN OF THE STREAM

**H**ARDY'S boyhood in northern Illinois was uneventful. He had a creditable college career, and became an athlete, always with one defect, an occasional reminder of an old trouble with his throat. He studied law, was admitted to the bar, and was not quite definitively in love with a dearest girl, when his defect reached its climax and he became nearly voiceless.

It is hard indeed to lose any one of the senses or any one of the powers. We use them unthinkingly until a defect appears, when, whatever it may be, it is to the sufferer the most serious possible loss. Hardy's promising career was ended at its threshold, and, as his only chance for recovery was by living in mountain air, his father's friend and law partner, Colonel Warren, sent him to the care of John, a



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wise and observant woods guide. He determined to learn woodcraft, and it was probably well for him and for his zeal that he had no conception of the size of his undertaking, although he was nearly right in his idea that it was the art of doing what you will in the woods.

The experienced sportsman is apt to learn to dislike the name, "guide"; or possibly only to dislike being guided by any one in his rambles in the woods. To him a large part of the charm of it all is absolute freedom and self-reliance, and this is slightly dulled when the planning is done by an employé, or when he may be skilfully and tamely led out of trouble like an erring child. Nevertheless, the splendid woodsmen who serve as guides are indispensable, both for creature comfort and as sources of information. Without such a trained woods housekeeper and boatman, a sportsman who has a few weeks' outing each year learns slowly and lives wretchedly. If he is zealous and willing to work he can shorten his apprenticeship



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in woodcraft and do it all alone, if he will study Systematic Botany and Entomology ; read the books of Seton Thompson and Livingston Stone, and Wordsworth's poems ; and then, with a proper mixture of energy and caution, go into the woods with the zeal of a lover, prepared for accidents and hardships, with eyes wide open for minute inspection rather than for general seeing. The object of his love is not coy, and he need not be afraid to know too much about her.

Nevertheless, any sportsman, young or old, can do more, learn more, and enjoy more with a good guide than without one. They vary, these guides, in character and value, as do all other human beings, but we are thinking only of the thorough woodsman guide who has knowledge, self-respect, and pride in his calling. He is a keen, versatile sportsman. He cares for your health and does the work of a valet in a motherly fashion. He carves out the fuel while you admire him as an athlete and a sculptor. He



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cooks with the dignity and skill of a laboratory professor, but he is not professorial after the dishes are washed, by the camp fire in the evening, when he is your peer, a modest, simple gentleman, whose life has been away from men, among the mute works of God.

When Hardy came to the trout hatchery and met John, it was in the early spring, before the snow and ice had gone, while the forest was still black and the only leaf colors were the deep greens of the spruces, hemlocks, and balsams. The hatchery was in its most interesting and wonderful period. In shallow troughs of blackened boards, in a gently flowing current of spring water, he saw thousands of feeble swimmers that looked like animated half-inch finishing-nails. These were trout in the third stage of their existence, learning to swim and to eat; being tenderly equipped for a fierce struggle for life, in which the days without hunger or danger would be few indeed; in which tragedies would be frequent and which



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would surely end in tragedy. It is not reasonable to expect any sportive or humorous tendency to develop among the survivors of a race whose energy is devoted to getting food and avoiding danger. A trout is a fierce and solemn brute, that does not fight unnecessarily, and that does not hesitate to eat his own brother, sister, or children, when by any chance they most conveniently satisfy his appetite. He is an exemplar of that singleness of purpose and concentrated effort which we, as sages, advise the young to emulate, but which in our own lives we find quite unsatisfactory.

These baby trout, the "fry," were being fed five or six times a day by carefully distributing minutely ground liver in the water in the troughs. As the floury substance sank to the bottom, Hardy, by careful watching, could occasionally see a particle consumed by a listless baby. Apparently none of them ate these particles except during the time they were floating freely in the water, and it seemed to him



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wasteful that the caretaker should, soon after serving food, proceed to sweep the bottom clean with a hawk's-wing feather. He learned, later, how surely tainted food kills all the young trout in a trough.

The hatchery had at this time many other processes than the feeding-troughs which were of interest, for, happily, the beginnings of life, from the egg to the fry, are so delicate as well as beyond all understanding, are accelerated or retarded so subtly, that they do not come out all at once like the blossoms of an apple tree, but develop day by day, some early and some late, covering a period of many days. If the provisions of Nature were otherwise, few of those born naturally in the streams could live, and artificial hatching would have an almost insurmountable difficulty.

If Hardy had come a little earlier to the troughs, he would have seen nearly submerged blackened wooden frames with bottoms of moderately coarse wire-netting, and these



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paved with pearls, the yet unhatched eggs. He did see, in adjoining troughs, little alevins lying quietly in great masses. The eggs were still attached to their slender bodies, and they reminded him of classic drawings of the heart pierced with an arrow. This was their dawn of consciousness, and their only movements seemed to be made by the current of water that was rustling among them. Nevertheless, their little hearts were beating and their organs were making muscle from the yolk of the egg to which they were attached.

Hardy had so many questions to ask that he was afraid of forgetting them, but it was cold and damp, and the men were eagerly busy. There was also great difficulty with his weak voice in making himself heard. A rush of water came into the hatchery through 5-inch pipes, and poured, as it seemed to him, with a uselessly heavy fall into a head trough, where it rushed noisily along until it was exhausted by successive taps which took contributions



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from it to the troughs that held the trout fry. After supper, by the fire, he had no difficulty in getting answers from John.

“Trout fry,” said John, “are like all other babies; they’re always wantin’ somethin’. When they don’t get enough food they hunt up diseases, and when they have enough food they yearn for accidents. The worst disease is fungus, which grows on fry or on old trout just as fungus grows on trees. Fact is, it comes from fresh boards or from sawdust. The reason a saw-mill kills all the trout is that sawdust breeds fungus, not because the sawdust chokes the fishes’ gills, as some people think. Nothin’ can save a trout after a white fungus spot comes, for it grows larger and larger, until he turns on his side and dies. It’s contagious, and when fungus comes you can’t pick the sick ones out fast enough to save many. Of course you can check it a little by puttin’ salt in the water, but the best way is to prevent it altogether by burnin’ all the wood in the troughs



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and trays until the surfaces are charred, or else by paintin' everything with asphalt, which is about as sure. Then there is dropsy or blue swellin', gill fever, fin disease, and lots of other small troubles which carry off weak ones that are perhaps not worth savin'. But sometimes the strong ones get logy, stop eatin' for a few days and then die. This comes of high livin' and pure water. It's easy to cure it by puttin' mud in the water. I know one hatchery where they had pure spring water, right out of the rock, and the fry fatted up and died. They led the spring into an artificial pond where cattle came to drink and riled it every day. After that they had no more logy trout. You don't believe it? It's true. The hatchery is n't there now, but I can show you the spring and the cows.

"A good many trout are weak or imperfect when they're born, but after they're thinned out, I think starvation kills more than disease does, so we feed 'em often and all they want.



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It's easy to feed the strong ones that stay up in the lively water at the head of the trough ; but the weak ones that get discouraged and drop down the current toward the foot of the trough need coddlin'.

"I don't see how these innocent fry can grow up to be cannibals, but they do. All fish are like some men that start right and go wrong. Billy Drew tells a story and I know it's true. Last summer when he was fishin' in Long Lake, the buckskin thong that was fastened on his watch slipped off his pants' button and the watch dropped out of his pocket into forty feet of water. In the fall I was out with him spearin' pickerel, and when we come ashore I says, 'Billy, what makes that tickin' sound?' and says he, 'I guess that's my watch.' And he opened a ten-pound pickerel and found it, keepin' time just as natural as any watch. The thong was looped on the pickerel's jaw, and was more or less wound on the stem-winder, and the motions of bitin' and digestin' kep' the



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watch spring tight as a drum, for a pickerel never rests."

"John," said Hardy, "is that all true?"

"I 'm afraid it ain't all true," said John. "You can't depend on Billy on the part of the weights he gives for fish. I never thought his pickerel, without the watch, weighed more 'n about eight pounds, but the point is true that all fish are hungry sometimes, not all times, and 'll bite almost anything.

"In a few weeks, when the fry in our troughs have learned what fun it is to eat, they 'll begin to object to our bill of fare, and call it monotonous and hold indignation meetin's and inquire of each other if any one ever heard of havin' nothin' but liver to eat six times a day. A good many 'll conclude that there 's more variety and excitement outside, and they 'll crowd under the tail-board, and into the wire meshes, and die there. Then the black flies and mosquitoes will come and hover over the troughs and the trout 'll leap for 'em and throw them-



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selves over the sides to die on the floor. The only thing that has more appetite than trout is a reptile. Every crack in the hatchery needs to be closed tight to keep out snakes, lizards, and frogs. I found a frog at the troughs one mornin' and cut him open and counted out four hundred fry."

"He must have belonged, or wanted to belong, to the 'Smart Set,'" said Hardy. "But what is the result of all these diseases and accidents? How many fish, out of a thousand eggs, live?"

"That depends on the eggs, and the diseases and the accidents. Some lots of eggs produce mostly weak or deformed fish, while other lots hatch out 95 per cent of good ones. Without figurin' on serious accidents, such as the breakin' away of the dam or freezin' of the water in the intake pipe, when everything in the hatchery may be lost, it's good work in this region to save three-quarters of 'em until May and June, when we put out fry; or half of 'em to October, when we call 'em finger-



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lings. This, of course, is thousands of times better luck than trout have when they spawn naturally in the streams. One man's guess is as good as another's, but I don't suppose that more 'n one out of a thousand natural born eggs makes a trout that lives. If it did, they would pretty soon be thick enough to raise the river a foot a year."

"Mr. Hardy," said John, one evening in April, "would you like to go with me to look up puttin'-out places for fry? It'll be a long walk, so that we'll have to stay out one night, and a good deal of it will be bad goin', so we can't carry much for comfort and food."

"Shall we camp out?"

"Sure, we will."

"Then please take me along, and give me the greatest pleasure of my life."

"I don't rightly see how gettin' tired and then fightin' for comfort, as you have to do in campin,' is pleasure. Seems to me a good supper, a rockin' chair, a pipe, bed-time, and a soft bed,



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gets a man a little nearer heaven than anything else does, but I've got to go and of course I'd like to have you go along, if you think you can stan' it. Last August I went over all the spring brooks in this region and made a list of all that went dry and of all that were alive in the dry season, so that this spring we could stock with fry all the livin' brooks."

"Why, then, John, do you need to go now and look them all over again?"

"Because a man with a carry-can and thirty pounds of water hammerin' his back at every step needs easy goin', and I want to look up the shortest and easiest ways to get to the little creeks and blaze out lines for the carry-men to follow. If I don't do that, they are liable to get tired and turn all the trout loose in the first stream they come to, and then rest an hour or so and come back to the hatchery lookin' just as if they loved hard work. I want 'em to follow my lines and cut a notch on a tree by the brook wherever a can has been emptied, and



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then when I come along I'll know they have been there."

"I see," said Hardy, "the tree takes a receipt and holds it for you as *cestui que* trust. But how many trout do you put in one stream, and why do you put them in the very small spring brooks?"

"We put 'em in the smallest livin' brooks and scatter 'em as much as possible, so they can hide. Each one needs a sunk leaf, or a chip, or a stone, or a twig, to hide under; just big enough to cover him and not attract the curiosity of an enemy — the smaller the better. You see everybody is waitin' for him and lookin' for him from the moment he is put out until he is killed, and he's a-goin' to live anywhere from one second to ten years, accordin' to his luck, but the killin' is sure. I never knew of a trout dyin' of old age, although I've heard of it; but you hear of a good many things. His worst enemies are his own kind, his older brothers and sisters, father and mother, uncles and aunts; and



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that 's why we put out fry in the smallest possible streams, too small to hold big trout. ' We put out a can of little trout last year on a shoal in the lake, and a few minutes afterward I flycasted and caught a quarter-pounder that had fourteen of our little home-made trout inside of him.

"Then there are the kingfishers, fish-hawks, weasels, mink, muskrats, snakes, frogs, and lizards, all a-lookin' for him with beady eyes. He has a hard time tryin' to lead a quiet, retired life and grow up and get fat and please a fly fisherman, and that 's the reason they need to be scattered at first as much as possible, so each little fish can have his own pet leaf or stone to live under. He 'll make short trips from it to catch an insect, and then slip back to digest it. A pack-can load, about 5000 fry, ought to be scattered along eighty to a hundred and sixty rod of a very small brook."

"When is the best time to put out trout?"

"I don't know. I used to put 'em out just when they had used up the eggs they had been



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fastened to and livin' on since they were born and when they were gettin' free from the sacs — just before they 'd learned to eat with their mouths. This has a good many advantages, for you can carry twice as many safe in the can, and you save the expense of food and feedin' in the hatchery, and I hope that one in a hundred of 'em lived, but I doubt it. A few years ago I got orders to hold the fry in the hatchery and feed 'em for a year before puttin' out. Probably one-third of them lived to be yearlin's, which was good enough, but we figured that from first to last these yearlin's cost five cents apiece. Now we 're holdin' the fry in the troughs and gettin' 'em as fat and frisky as possible, so 's to put out just before hot weather comes. Then we close the hatchery and stop expense until September."

"I wish you would tell me, John, just how the fry are carried and put out. You know I have enlisted for that work when the time comes."

"If I tell it all, I 'll need to begin now and talk



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fast so as to get through in the next three weeks. If the weather 's cool and you have only a few miles to carry, everything is easy. You can put 5000 fry in about four gallons of water, and with a forty-pound pack you can walk through without stoppin' and not lose a trout. You 'll only break your back and pound your knees sore, for water 's the hardest load a man can carry. Trout live in less water while bein' carried in a pack-can than in any other way, because every step churns the water and mixes fresh air with it, and that is just what the trout want. They breathe air, not water. But if the carry is a long one, the water 'll get warm, because your can is patterned to fit your back pretty close, and warm water does n't hold air in it anything like so easy as cold water does. Then when you stop to rest you 'll see a lot of fry strugglin' with their heads at the top of the water, tryin' to get air, and they 'll begin to die fast unless you do somethin' right away. Always stop to rest where there 's cold water,



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but don't be in a hurry to put cold water in the can, for a sudden change will kill a good many. Set the can in the water and let it cool gradually, even if it takes half an hour, and while you 're waitin' pour water from the can into your cup and, holdin' it high up, pour the water back again. In a little while you can safely pour water from the can and throw it away, and dip from the cold water and pour it in the can. It's fine to see the fry gradually get enough air to satisfy 'em, and then drop to the bottom and be comfortable and contented.

"As the weather gets warmer, you need to use ice, but you mus' n't put the ice loose in the can. It'll rattle 'round and bruise and destroy more trout than a mink would. I suppose there's a good many ways of carryin' ice without hurtin' the trout, and probably some of 'em are better than our way. We put a few pounds of ice on a piece of cheese-cloth, then gether the ends together and tie 'em to the top of the can, lettin' the bag of ice swing inside,



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just free from the top of the water. The great thing is to keep the fish pleased and satisfied, so they 'll stay at the bottom. When any of 'em come to the surface, you may know that trouble has begun and you must give 'em air in some way, even if you have to pump it in with bellows. It is n't a bad idea to carry along a common fireplace bellows, and occasionally give 'em a blowin' up.

“When you come to the water where the trout are to be set free, set your can in the water and, by dippin' and pourin' and waitin', get the same temperature in the can as in the stream. If you have to wait for this, put in your time a-strollin' along the stream to see if there are too many natural enemies to make it healthy for your little friends. Then you can turn your can carefully in the water and float out afew at a time in likely places. It 's well, when your can is emptied, to go along back quietly and see what 's happened. You 're liable to see a big trout havin' lots of fun with the innocents abroad.”



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**I**N the morning they made an early start, and as Hardy followed John he was full of boyish joy, of a kind of exaltation he had not felt since he had long ago looked forward to a Sunday-school picnic. There was still snow in the thick swamps, and it had only lately gone from the hills and the hard-wood flats, but the water had sunk in the duff—the sponge that covers the Adirondack rocks and acts as a reservoir, gradually releasing the water during dry times and helping to maintain a more uniform flow from the springs and in the streams. The sponge consists largely of resinous leaves of the evergreens, which are slow to decay and thus prevent the formation of hard soil. As long as the trees are preserved so that their shade prevents too rapid evaporation, the natural reservoir system is automatically



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perfect. To ruin it is as easy as it is to spoil a watch, and careless lumbermen know how to do it.

It occurred to Hardy that it was hard to keep his heels near the ground. His buoyancy of spirits and the marvellous elasticity of the North Woods trail gave him the feeling of bounding and rebounding, and he thought of himself as the striking bag in the gymnasium where he had so often worked. John's equipment and his carriage made a striking figure. His pack-basket seemed to emphasize his erectness. He stepped quickly and with the least possible exertion, but so lightly that Hardy could not hear his footfalls. He never seemed to be looking for his footing, yet he skipped the sticks and stones on which Hardy, in spite of his care, was often noisily stumbling. John's eyes kept constant watch, both far and near, while Hardy had need of all this sense to guide his steps. "Better not watch your feet so much," said John, as they halted for a rest. "Step high



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and look ahead and all 'round and see what 's goin' on. When you are trampin' in the woods always be still and try to see everything unusual. You 'll soon learn to watch the ground the same time you 're lookin' ahead. You can see logs and sticks, ahead of you, out of the under side of your eyes, and allow for 'em when you get to 'em, without lookin' at 'em. Don't drag your toes, and never step on a stick or a stone when there is any other footin', unless you really want to slip and make a noise and never see anything. Noise does n't do anygood, and it frightens everything that can run or hide. You step on a twig and see only the flash of a deer's flag as it goes out of sight over a knoll. I 'm a-thinkin' you might cure that cough of yours, Mr. Hardy, if you don't mind the bitter taste of balsam blister. You 'll be more comfortable and have a chance to see more if you git red of it."

As he was speaking, John had opened his knife and neatly wiped and polished its blade



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on a leaf. He turned to a balsam tree and pricked the lower edge of a blister. He then flattened the blister with his forefinger and pressed out on the clean knife-blade a few drops of thin, amber-colored gum, and offered it to Hardy.

"It would be easier to swallow if I had a lump of sugar to drop it on," said he.

"What a spicy woods' odor it has!" said Hardy, hesitating. "It is inspiring. It is the heart of the woods."

"It smells good, but it tastes bad, and it'll cure you, if you'll carry lumps of sugar in your pocket and take a few drops of balsam two or three times a day. There's plenty of cough medicine 'round here. Now, there's Indian turnip, or Jack-in-the-Pulpit."

"No, John, you would n't lure me into biting that root, would you? I tried it when I was a boy, and I shall never forget the frightful burning and choking taste of Indian turnip."

"That's right, when it's fresh, but when the



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root is dried it loses its caustic and is as bland as a baked potato. It's like arrow-root; you grate it and a teaspoonful three times a day is good for colds or fevers or bronchitis. When you can't find Indian turnip, you can always take the inner bark of wild cherry and make a tea that is nearly as good for a cough."

"John, is n't that the leaf of the trailing arbutus?"

"Good eye! good boy!" said John. "I've been watchin' for it on every likely slope since we started, and while we've been restin' here I've been preachin' instead of lookin'. You'll be a woodsman, for you can see."

By brushing aside the coating of dead hardwood leaves they uncovered a quantity of the sweet and beautiful blossoms, and John told Hardy of the habits of this lovely early flower which plays hide-and-seek with the sunlight.

"But I don't know what they're good for," he added, regretfully, for in John's mind was listed nearly every plant and shrub that grows



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in the woods, and opposite its name was a disease or an accident it was "good for."

"Put this down in your mind, John," said Hardy: "trailing arbutus is good for envy, hatred, and malice."

The day was spent in hard work, and it seemed to Hardy unaccountable that, in spite of his athletic training, in the vigor of his youth, he soon exhausted himself, while old John, carrying the pack and a light axe, was tireless. The "going" was distinctly bad, for they were blazing lines to small spring-brooks which naturally head in swamps and rough country. He had a valuable first lesson in the art of getting through the woods and holding a line while skirting burned ground, windfalls, high hills, and swamps. The sun was nearly down when they reached an open camp, with a spruce-bark roof, where they were to spend the night. John swung his pack-basket to the ground quickly, and, with almost no halt in his easy stride, kept on to a young hemlock tree. With his axe he trimmed away the



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lower branches and the near-by witch hopples; then with a few blows he cut out a notch in the trunk on the side toward the camp. A cut on the opposite side of the tree started it and it fell with a soft swish.

“Mr. Hardy, we have considerable to do to get comfortable before dark, and the first thing to be sure of is a dry bed. You can break off these hemlock boughs pretty fast, and when you get a handful, put 'em down a little careful, with the butts all one way, until you get a pile big enough for an armful, and carry 'em into camp, and then put 'em down again careful, in piles, with the butts all one way. This 'll save you a heap of trouble in makin' a bed by plantin' all the butts down, so we can sleep on the soft tops.”

John's lecture on bed making was illustrated, and Hardy felt so confident of having already mastered the art that he asked for the job, and in half an hour he had finished it and tried it, and wondered why houses were built or beds were



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bought. He had learned to thatch the boughs carefully and tightly, with the stiff stems buried under the elastic tips. The air of the camp seemed to be purified by the healing odor of the evergreen, and the soft cushion promised a restorative for his aching bones.

Meantime John had been busy with his axe. He had "felled" a ten-inch yellow birch, lopped its branches, and cut it into lengths rather shorter than ordinary cord-wood. He had found a red-spruce stump and cut and split from it several armfuls of quick-burning wood for kindling and for cooking. Hardy had finished his task in time to see John begin the delicate work of building his cooking-fire.

Possibly a woodsman's tool more nearly perfect and capable of a greater variety of uses than the axe may sometime be invented, but it does not seem probable. A two-handed cross-cut saw is more economical of time and of material, in falling and cutting lengths of timber in large quantities. An adz is somewhat



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more convenient for flattening the upper side of timber that cannot be easily turned over. A broad-axe hews to the line more accurately. A hammer or a maul, for special services, is better than the poll of an axe. But in the hands of a master the axe does all this work and much other work, well and quickly. In the matter of weight and pattern the masters have their fancies. One may prefer a few ounces more in the poll and less in the cheek, while another prefers the slightly fatter cheek because it throws a chip more smartly; but the variations in pattern from the development of centuries of fining down are small indeed. There are preferences for extra weight or for lightness, for use in hard wood or soft wood, or for service where the axe is to be carried more than it is used, but the man with a three or three-and-a-half pound sharp axe who complains of his tool, is not a master.

There are leaning forest trees that cannot be cut and dropped where the master wants them



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to go without the use of a rope, but they are not common, and he will study long before losing belief that with his axe alone he can put the tree where he wants it. He may possibly drop an adjoining tree so that its crotch will be hung up on the leaning one and act as a swaying brace to swing the obstinate one in the way it should go. Ordinarily, when a doomed tree has been viewed from two sides, the exact line, within a yard, where it is to fall, is quickly foretold, and when bushes or limbs that might interfere with the full swing are cleared away the rhythmic strokes begin. You could dance to the perfect time and musical ring of the axe until the great notch is cut; and the blows have followed each other with such wonderful precision that the cut surface is as smooth as a baby's cheek. No golfer can swing more truly or carry through more freely than the trained woodsman swings his axe. A few strokes on the opposite side and the tree crashes down on the chosen line.



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But tree cutting is only one of the many uses of the axe. Miles away from a grindstone, its edge is guarded with the greatest care, and although other tools are handy, the axe alone is equal to all the requirements of building woods' structures and operating them. We used to think that John had no razor, although he always kept clean shaven.

"It seems to me, John, that you have cut enough wood to do our cooking for a good many days."

"So I have, Mr. Hardy, but we need about all of that birch in place of blankets to-night. Can't carry blankets on a raidin' trip like this, and besides, with a good fire at your feet and your head and shoulders wrapped in your coat, you 're as comfortable as blankets could make you. Of course, somebody has to wake up whenever the fire goes down and kick it together and put on a fresh stick, and that happens every few hours. It 's a hardship when you 're not used to it, for in the mornin' you



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feel broke of your rest. But it's queer how soon you get into the habit and don't notice it. I sometimes think that I get up and fix the fire without wakin' up at all. When you have an axe and can get yellow birch, everything is easy, and it's better green than when it's seasoned for a night fire. It's the only tree I know that is good firewood when the leaves are on, and the bark is fine kindlin'. I suppose it's made so on purpose, and made to grow everywhere in these woods, on high ground and on low ground, always ready and waitin' for us to make ourselves comfortable with an axe and a match. Perhaps it'll be better to have the night fire ready before we get supper."

With increasing wonder Hardy watched this operation, and when the structure was built he felt so sure that everything was exactly wrong side up that he expected John to complete the work by tipping it bodily over. John had placed, about three feet apart, as andirons, two water-logged pieces of balsam. Spanning these



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were three birch sticks, closely laid, and two more birch logs were placed on top, rather tightly fitted into the chinks of the logs below. On top of this compact mass he put a few handfuls of birch curl and an open structure made of the dry spruce kindling-wood.

“That,” explained John, “is a top fire. We ’ll light the curl just before supper and have light and heat right away, without havin’ to wait for it as you do when the fire is laid with the kindlin’ under and the heavy wood above. Then the top fire will eat slowly down into the birch and we ’ll have a stiddy fire that ’ll last four hours and give about the same amount of heat all the time, instead of blazin’ up high and drivin’ us out of camp and then burnin’ itself out.”

Although Hardy was extremely anxious to help in preparing the evening meal, he soon saw that it was a work of art which the self-respecting John took seriously, and that until he had acquired skill by observation it was better to rest



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and watch. As soon as the cooking-fire was in good order and a kettle of water was swinging above it, John made a careful toilet. He combed his hair, and then, with shining face and hands as clean as soap and water could make them, he began his work. A true gentleman, as pure and wholesome and self-respecting in the wilderness as he would have been among the restraints of civilization, John sliced the bacon with neatness and dignity. He slightly parboiled the bacon before frying it. He made some crisp toast and poured over it the contents of a can of soft clams that he had heated and seasoned. He made a large quantity of very weak tea, opened and vented with the corner of his axe a can of condensed milk, and then quite unnecessarily asked Hardy if he was hungry enough to eat something.

After breakfast the next morning, John developed his plan for the day. "I'm a-thinkin', Mr. Hardy, you'd like to try your fly-rod. It's too early for trout to rise, and the river is



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too high, and it has snow water in it, but you never can tell. I have a boat above here, hid out, that I could put in and paddle you 'round while you see if there's anything movin'."

It amused and mystified Hardy to see John follow a straight course for a long distance through the woods, where there were no visible markings, and stop beside a mossy ridge upon which pieces of bark and small limbs had apparently for years been accumulating. When these were brushed off the boat appeared. It was rather heavy for a carry boat, but John took it without difficulty the short distance to the river, followed by his companion with the oars and thwart.

Hardy was not a novice in the use of a fly-rod. He landed the flies lightly and drew them slowly on the surface of likely still-waters, or allowed them to be fidgeted on a rift. He made no attempts to cast far, unless it seemed to be necessary to reach water where a trout ought to be. For half an hour he patiently tried his



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lures without the reward of any sign of life, and without the suggestion of a complaint, for he enjoyed it. He knew that he was doing good work and that this was the limit of his responsibility.

“ Was there ever anything as glorious as this ? This purple morning, lovely woods, and beautiful, beautiful river ? I never want to leave it.”

“ Might ’s well leave it now as any time. You can’t ketch anything, but you *can* cast a fly. I wonder if you feel strong enough to take a little walk. There are two ponds a few miles north of here, I don’t rightly know how far, for I ran on to ’em a-puttin’ out dogs from the other side. I believe I could find ’em and that you could have some fishin’, for the trout most generally come earlier in the ponds than they do in the river, on the part of the snow that melts into the river and makes the trout think spring has n’t come. It is n’t so terribly much out of our way back, and we can sure get home by dark.”



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But in this estimate John did not allow enough for vicissitudes in a strange country, or for the aberrations of a tenderfoot. They found what even he admitted to be "bad goin'," through a stretch of burned ground which he unsuccessfully tried to get around. Charred pine and spruce logs with sharp-pointed limbs were hidden in the briars and fire-weed. Hardy repeatedly tore his clothes and wounded his legs and hands, and he had, too, an unformulated loss of self-respect, probably due to his stumbling as well as to his blackened hands and face. His shoe-strings were an annoyance, for he stopped to re-tie them many times before it dully occurred to him to tie them in hard knots. His feet were sore and he was on the point of confessing his miserable condition when John relieved him by saying: "This is gittin' to be a little tough, but I see a line of green timber, and likely there 's water there that helped to stop the burnin'."

It was a relief to hear from John that now he



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knew "the lay of the country, and we can't be far from the lake," but nevertheless it was a long distance, and it was past noon when they ate their lunch on a jutting point opposite a rocky shoal in the beautiful mountain pond. There was a great splash in the water.

"Did you see that?" said John. "That trout weighed a pound if he weighed an ounce. Get your rod together quick. We have time yet to ketch a basketful and get home before dark if you'll jint up quick."

What pain is so keen, or what misery so hopeless as that which comes from the consciousness of being a fool? In such a case human sympathy is odious. Pitying and encouraging words are maddening. When Hardy had confessed that he did not know where his rod was, that he had laid it down somewhere in the woods, he bitterly resented John's mild attempt to palliate his inexcusable carelessness.

"Where were you when you felt it in your hands last?"



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"I don't know. I had it when we left the boat, but I stopped seven times in the burned ground to tie my shoes, and I fell down three times. I know I had it in my hands each time I fell down."

"You probably left it where we rested in the green timber," said John, "and I'll just step back and get it."

"Now," said he, when he returned with the rod more than an hour later, "work pretty fast, if you want to sample this fishin' and get home to-night. It's a-goin' to rain, and there's no roof around here."

Hardy's casting was not as precise as the exhibition he had made on the river. The bushes interfered with the back cast, a storm was coming and the flurries of rising wind made it difficult, but the rewards were great. Nearly every successful cast brought an answer from the troubled water, and he had enough trout and big enough trout when John called a halt.

"Now we *are* in trouble. That sky is a-goin'



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to fall in, and it 'll be black dark in an hour from now."

The warning was even shorter than that, for they had just reached the outlet and stood by a riven pine, when a record-breaking downpour of rain came upon them. They were quickly soaked, and John prophesied, "It 'll keep a-comin' all night." To Hardy the situation seemed hopeless, and it was not softened by remembering that it was due to the delay caused by his own carelessness with his rod. But John rose to the emergency. He seemed to love trouble.

"Put your waterproof over that pack-basket, Mr. Hardy. We have n't much there to eat, but we want to keep what there is. This don't look very promisin', but there 's no place in the woods where you can't get comfort if you hev an axe and matches."

Hardy stood in the downpour and watched, and helped handily wherever he could, while John with his axe quickly girdled a large



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spruce, making one cutting near the ground and a second one as high as he could reach ; and then with a long wedge, which he called a "spud," made from a sapling, prized the sheet of bark from the tree. He secured several of these sheets.

Like a shop foreman, who knows exactly where each tool is, and where the raw material is stored, John went without hesitation to a bunch of second growth in a near-by windfall and chose and cut two birch saplings whose main crotches were about six feet from the ground. He quickly cut and trimmed an armful of poles of various sizes, which Hardy helped to carry in. He planted the birch saplings in the duff, four feet apart, and drove them until the crotches were only four feet high. A short cross-bar was put in the crotches, and the façade was complete. Two strong poles, eight feet long, sloped from each crotch downward and backward, parallel to each other, to where they were embedded in the duff. A few poles



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were laid on this wedge-shaped frame to support the sheets of bark that were put on it. A sheet of bark was braced to each side and partly supported by a few armfuls of moss which were packed against them, and the one-night stand was complete. It was made by a man with an axe.

It seemed barely possible for two men to get cover and to sleep comfortably in this little camp, if it were not for the fact that the sponge inside the camp was reeking with rain water and that their clothing was equally wet.

"That 's easy," said John, "if we can get fire."

He cut up two young birch-trees, but did not split the logs, leaving the bark to keep the wood dry. Hardy gathered from the dry side of a huge birch-tree as much of its resinous bark, or "curl," as he could protect with his waterproof until it was under the shelter of the camp. Then John cut out of the dead riven pine, slabs and slivers for kindling, which Hardy hastily put under cover. When all was ready for the



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fire, he held up a sheet of bark as a roof while John started the tiny flame. When the heat became intolerable John made another roof for it of heavy spruce boughs, which deflected enough rain to protect the now increasing fire. This was slow work, and it was late in the evening when the camp was dried by the roaring fire in front of it, the supper of trout, bacon, and tea cooked and eaten, their clothes hung inside the shelter, steaming before the fire, and the two sportsmen, in their first-birthday suits, were comfortably smoking while the rain continued to come. Perfect comfort came later, won, as John had said, with an axe and a match. With dried clothes in a dry camp they watched the fire and exultingly listened to the rain.

"Rain leaves you in better shape than salt water does," said John. "At Fort Fisher we had to dry out without any fire."

"Were you in the Civil War?"

"All through."

Sleep was beginning to have charms for Har-



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dy, but stories of the Civil War had a fascination which he never resisted.

“Tell me what you did at Fort Fisher.”

“I did n’t do much in the first attack, nor very much in the second one. General Butler sent our regiment ashore in surf-boats and of course we were soaked. We crawled up in the night pretty near to the stockade of the fort and lay there without a sound, about as uncomfortable as men could be, waitin’ and hopin’ for an order to rush the fort and get warm. Then we got an order to march back to the boats, and that’s all I know of the first attack on Fort Fisher.”

John’s story, as he told it, was much longer than this, and Hardy was now really sleepy. Nevertheless, he could not resist the temptation to start John on the story of the second attack on Fort Fisher.

“General Terry commanded us the second time. I only know the part of it I was in. The fort was full of Johnnies when we got there, and our company was ordered to make holes



## A MAN WITH AN AXE

through the stockade, on the part of our all be-in' woodsmen and handy with an axe and a rifle. The Rebels had a mean way of hangin' their rifles over the top of the stockade and spatterin' us while we were choppin'. So we paired off, one man to chop and the other to watch with a rifle. Billy Drew and I were partners. He did the shootin' while I did the choppin', and he always claimed that he had good luck. When I got an openin' we went in to see what was goin' on and we saw a white flag and felt pretty good. There was a good deal goin' on, on the parade-ground, so Billy and I kep' together and walked along by the bomb-proofs, till a Rebel captain, who had n't heard about his surrender, suddenly jumped out and knocked Billy down with the butt of his revolver. He was so spry that before I could turn my musket he had an under holt on me and we rassled —"

John's story was stopped by a sound not unlike the sougning of the pines. Nature's sweet restorer was wrestling with Hardy.



## THE TWO LONS

FOR a fortnight they had been carrying brook trout from the hatchery and setting them free in the streams. Every morning the train of men started soon after daylight, each man carrying a ten-gallon tin can, slightly concave on the inside next to the back, and supported by two broad straps, which started from the middle of the inside upper rim. Each strap passed forward over a shoulder and returned under the arm to where it was again attached to the lower inside corners of the can. A pack-basket is strapped in the same way, but a pack-basket is a joy, while a pack-can is something else. The basket is elastic and, properly adjusted, it fits the back, so that as the carrier leans slightly forward the pressure of the load is taken somewhat evenly along the back and,



## THE TWO LONS

through the straps, upon the shoulders. An ordinary man with some training carries forty pounds easily and learns to love his pack, while a trained woodsman does not usually begin to formulate his objections until he has been loaded beyond seventy pounds. A pack-can, with four gallons of water in which four or five thousand trout fry are taking their first long journey, is an uncompromising, ill-behaving load. Hardy faithfully performed his new duties, carrying his water load sometimes as far as ten miles with the rest of the carriers, and returning to the hatchery the same day; but the first week was a week of trials. His easy, swinging, athletic walk was not adapted to the service. He was a race horse hitched to a plow. He had to learn, and he did learn, to walk straight, with no side motion; to plant his foot, bearing on the sole more than on the heel, with the toes pointing exactly forward, so as to make his foot-prints nearly tandem. Any variation from this way of walking sent thirty pounds of water



## THE LOVERS OF THE WOODS

surging from side to side and developed many foot-pounds of energy which he must brace himself to counteract.

When he had learned to walk in this Indian fashion, he wondered why any one should ever have been taught to walk in any other way. He soon learned that he could walk a log spanning a stream with confidence and certainty, that he made less noise and gathered less dew from the moose maples and witch hoppers that hovered to the edge of the narrow trails, and that after a long tramp he still had something left in him. John was not often with the carrying party ; he had other duties ; but Hardy was conscious of being carefully looked over every night by his watchful guardian, who asked few questions, but was prompt in diagnosis and with remedies. For the bodily damage done by the can and the straps before he became hardened, John had an infallible ointment, made from an infusion of St. John's-wort flowers in lard. The healings were quick, but this healthy young man



## THE TWO LONS

was a splendid patient. He rebelled once when John offered him, as he came in tired and hungry, a teaspoonful of powder grated from the root of the moccasin flower.

“What is that good for, John?”

“It stiddies the nerves. It would make a crazy woman set still.”

“Then it is not what I want. I want to swim in the river, and then I want food.”

“That’s a good sign, but I am a-thinkin’, Mr. Hardy, that change-works would be good for you, if you won’t take the moccasin root. I have an errand. Lon Yule, over on Indian Lake, has a boat that I want. It’s a ’leven-foot-bottom carry-boat, with spruce oars, that Dwight Grant built for him last winter. It weighs forty five pounds, yoke and all. It’s too light for him, but it’s just what I want. I hear that he upset a sportsman the other day, and I lay he’ll sell it for forty dollars. Would you like to go and buy it?”

There was never any question as to Hardy’s



## THE LOVERS OF THE WOODS

willingness for a new experience, and he expressed his eagerness to go.

“The river trail to the big bend that we call the Devil’s Elbow is pretty good goin’, but it must be a matter of seven miles. You can’t miss it if you are careful. The blazes are old, but they ’re all there, and you stick right to ’em, even if they do seem to lead back from the river most of the time. The river is crooked, and besides, the best goin’ is generally back on the slopes and the ridges. When you get to the Elbow you ’ll know it, because the trail ends there. At this stage of water you can wade across, but I think you ’ll find it more comfortable to take your stockin’s out of your shoes before you wade, and put ’em on dry when you get across, for you have three miles further to go on the trail that leads to Lon’s place on Indian Lake. You speak my name to Lon and he ’ll treat you right. If I should go he ’d know just what I come for and his boat would come dear. With your college education you can



## THE TWO LONS

do better than I can. When you buy it, you might hire Lon to carry it back as far as the Elbow and put it away careful in the shade where nobody 'll run on to it, but be sure and remember where you put it. Be careful to stand the oars with the handles up in the thick branches of a balsam or hemlock, so hedgehogs can't reach the handles and gnaw 'em."

"What are hedgehogs good for, John?"

"I wish I knew, and if I ever find out I'll get somebody to start a factory and gether 'em all in and work 'em up. A scientific party, I don't rightly know what his speciality was, come here last year and he had a terrible curoosity. He asked about most everything and kep' me so busy talkin' that I did n't take notice, at first of how much he knew. Then the first question I asked him was what hedgehogs was good for. I wrote down what he said because it was what I had thought of, but I could n't have told it. He said:

"I do not know that ; but I do know that Na-



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ture is perfect and that all living things are mutually dependent. There is a delicate balance, far beyond our present understanding, which we might disturb by exterminating any one of God's creatures.'

"That sounds true," said John; "but there must be a mistake on the part of hedgehogs, for they put in ten hours a day lookin' for boats and oars and camps to gnaw and destroy."

"I think," said Hardy, "that I should very much like to make the trip to Indian Lake, and I will do my best to make a good bargain for you and carry the boat back to the Elbow. I shall not need Lon's help in that, for I have seen you carry a boat and I should like to learn how to do it."

"There is n't much to learn, except to just do it, and be careful. Always be careful where you step when you have a boat over your head, for the boat yoke fits the shoulders and close 'round the neck, and if you slip or stumble something will likely be damaged."



## THE TWO LONS

Hardy started early in the morning for his first long tramp alone in the woods, and he was delighted to observe that he was learning to see. An Illinois boy, with a prairie training, he was most impressed by the exhibit of timber trees, but he knew so little of them that he soon decided to save the subject of woods botany for camp-fire talks with John. The solemn stillness of the woods, which he had earlier tried to describe in a letter, did not now appear to his better trained senses. The air was full of small sounds, and in trying to locate and determine them he became involved in his favorite diversion.

“I see a squirrel every ten steps that I take, no, every thirty steps, but surely I do not see half of them. It is safe to say that there is one to each fifty feet ; one to each twenty-five hundred square feet ; seventeen to the acre. I have heard that the State of New York owns more than a million acres of forest ; more than seventeen million squirrels. They ought to be worth



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as much as a cent apiece ; an asset of more than \$170,000 ; but *feræ naturæ* are not a legal asset. That is a pipe dream."

As he attentively watched for the blazes that indicated the trail, he learned to admire the ingenuity of the man who had cut out the small chips, breast high, so as to make the spot of color, or blaze. In difficult country these signs were numerous, but where it was open and the trail was straight, the blazes were six or eight rods apart. Nevertheless, as he passed one he could always see the next one — if he paid attention.

An unfamiliar trail is always a long one, for it is instinctively measured by experiences and not by time. Hardy saw deer, ruffed grouse, ducks, hedgehogs, and a great variety of smaller animal life, but he probably did not see one-twentieth of the animals that were watching him. He remembered John's warning :

"There 's somethin' lookin' at you every step you take."



## THE TWO LONS

In order to see things in the woods one needs to look specifically and not generally. A trout is small when seen from a boat or from the bank. He does not need a boulder or a log for a hiding-place, although he may sometimes be found near either one. A stick or a stone that is just large enough is good enough for him, and he seems to know that it is less obtrusive and less dangerous to lie quietly in the shadow of a small stick, or alongside small blackened stones, than in larger and more strongly marked hiding-places. In learning to see, it is well to experiment. Find a bank overhanging a likely trout pool; or still better, climb a few feet up an overhanging tree. Look thoroughly, and carefully count all the trout in sight; then wave your hat violently and make a fisherman's guess at the number you may see scurrying away. One person's eyesight is better than another's, but the difference has only a slight effect in the power of observation. The all-important quality is the habit of noting what is in sight, but



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to the untrained woodsman there is so much in sight, and so little is known of the leaves and trunks of the timber trees, of the logs, rocks, and undergrowth. He gazes broadly and his eyes drink in the whole landscape, getting only a slight taste of any one of its constituents. As the patient takes a dose of "Warbourg's Tincture," which is said to be a blend of sixty-four separate drugs, and which has but one flavor — a vile one — so does the young deer-hunter win noisily through bad going to an open space and study the landscape in the large. He does not know the leaves or their colors. He does not note one that is in plain sight a dozen rods off, of slightly different color, shape, and size from any that ever grew on a tree. It is a deer's ear, and the ever alert animal has heard, or smelled, or seen him. He will stand still until some one or all of his senses tell him where his disturber is and that it is a man. He may then noiselessly steal away and leave only a fresh track to interest the sportsman, or he may



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defiantly romp, bounding over the undergrowth and showing a white flag to the mortified still hunter.

Still hunting is perhaps the best possible training in the art of seeing. "Good form" consists in lifting the foot at each step as high as the knee and then slowly pushing the toe forward over the witch hopples, and insinuating it gently, without sound, through small obstructions to the next footstep on the ground; always looking ahead through small openings for small unusual spots; peering over ridges, or resting in cover where the open can be minutely studied. The pace is not rapid, perhaps half a mile an hour, and in stealing along noiselessly the attitudes are absurd, but there are no onlookers except wild animals.

The pleasure of being a sleuth hound and an assassin is keen at first, but it is not lasting. The best preparation for making every day and hour in the woods a recreation, a training-school in self-help, patience, generosity, and religion,



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is to study and observe closely the form and growth of every tree and smaller plant, the habits and motives of every animal. Seeing with knowledge is quite different from ignorant looking.

Hardy had a thrill of pleasure when the trail opened out at the great Elbow of the river. It was his first landmark and he had made it surely, and all by himself. He crossed the broad beautiful rift easily, and as he was told to do it. He poured the water from his shoes, restored his dry stockings, and tramped merrily on. "Wet leather is good leather," and he felt refreshed. When he came to the lake, he swung along the beach toward the boat-house that had been described to him, and felt half mortified when he noted that, long before he saw her, he had been seen from the cabin and studied by a woman's eye. The other eye and the portly form of Mrs. Yule were characteristically withdrawn from the open doorway.

John's name, when he mentioned it by way



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of introduction of himself, caused a ripple of pleasant recognition, a ripple not limited to her countenance, but expanding into a gentle convulsion which involved the whole quaking mass. He felt that he was distinctly well received, although the taciturn Alonzo, when he appeared, was not at all demonstrative. He had been warned that "Lon is slow gettin' acquainted," so he made advances cautiously, determined to give to this forty-dollar purchase his finest diplomatic effort. The present duty is the all-important one. Mrs. Lon seemed to be her husband's facsimile in size and weight, and his opposite in all other qualities. The supper was abundant and the interval to bed-time was short. Hardy noted that while Lon, in brief statements of his own experiences, carefully repressed all indications of his skill or strength, nevertheless his massive helpmate always affectionately and ingeniously brought into the open these qualities which he undoubtedly possessed. Hardy had acquired the early-rising habit, and



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soon after daylight he was in the boat-house to quietly inspect the subject of his embassy. He saw, resting in stalls or pockets made of smooth poles, boats which to his unaccustomed eye seemed to be duplicates of each other. The stern and bow were alike and were decked for a foot or so from the stem toward the waist. The gunwale lines swelled sharply out from the bow and ran to amidships in a gradually softened curve, becoming nearly but not quite straight lines. They exactly repeated themselves from there to the stern. Hardy could not discover a straight line in the hull. It was a tangle of beautiful, varying curves, the result of lives of study by skilful designers and expert woodsmen. The strips of quartered pine that formed the graceful shell were, in places, less than an eighth of an inch thick. Each strip had been chisel-edged and perfectly matched, and riveted to its adjoining strip as it had been moulded and screwed to the spruce knees which had been fashioned to model the boat. The



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matching and finishing had been so perfectly done that the joints were not visible to him. The surface was leathery ; it was a dainty, graceful, and seaworthy boat, —

“ Built for freight, and yet for speed,  
A beautiful and gallant craft.”

Its place was on the water, right side up, but it was well within an ordinary man's capacity to carry one of them bottom side up, over the head, balanced at the centre on a wooden yoke carved out to fit the shoulders.

No man can be said to have invented or designed the carry-boat, for it has been a slow development, with improvements suggested by use. A man can carry for a short distance a pointed scow that may weigh two hundred pounds and be capable of transporting four men comfortably. Light canoes can be easily carried by one man, but those that are light enough for this purpose, being designed for movement by a paddle instead of by oars, are necessarily unseaworthy, even in small waters.



## THE LOVERS OF THE WOODS

A light canoe is a pleasure toy, quite unsatisfactory for most sporting purposes.

The designing of a boat fitted with oars and a carrying yoke seems to have been begun seriously by different persons after the year 1860. In 1865 it was best known as the "Saranac boat." The bow alone was pointed, the gunwale lines tapering inward on nearly a straight line from amidships to a narrow, square stern. They were clinker-built, of thin boards, each of whose lower edges lapped over the board next below. They rarely weighed less than one hundred and twenty-five pounds; they leaked after much exposure to the sun and wind; but they were swifter and more stanch than any canoe of similar weight, and the designers were on the right track.

Since then it has been a pretty race in competitive designing by men who have used the boats as well as built them; sturdy, ingenious woodsmen who generously applauded each other's successes. One of them was easily a



## THE TWO LONS

leader, for all got their best suggestions from Henry Dwight Grant. Hulls have been built of canvas, paper, aluminum, rawhide, Spanish cedar, and pine ; but there is nothing like pine, and it should come from the region of the Great Lakes. It must be the very old white pine that is called "cork pine," or "pumpkin pine." It has narrow sapwood. It is received in huge planks, five or six inches thick, each containing two hundred or more feet, board measure, and the honest builder overhauls many of them to get and use one that is absolutely free from shakes and knots, straight-grained and strong. Then the planks are "quartered ;" strips from a quarter to an eighth of an inch thick rived out on a line toward the heart of the tree. These are slowly seasoned and tested ; and only the perfect, toughest strips, selected by a master, should be used. A fourteen-foot ship that weighs only sixty pounds and carries a thousand pounds of load over rough water ; which is safe ; which travels easily faster than



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four miles an hour ; which never leaks ; and which lasts, with ordinarily good care, for twenty years, — needs to be made by a man who knows how, and who is passionately fond of being honest.

Hardy turned from his study of the boats and stood on the landing platform. The morning light and the yellow sand gave to the water the color and glow of melted gold. It was irresistible ; he took off his clothes and dove into the amber bath. He dearly loved water and sunlight, and he had discovered the charm of being absolutely alone. He had the world to himself, and no one saw him. He had noticed, resting on wooden pins on the boat-house wall, a fly-rod, strung up and ready for use. If the trout had arrived on the shoals they would surely come to this amber water. Everything was coming his way this morning, and it was not long before he had fastened a good trout. He was in no mood to hurry or to end his pleasure, so he played him long and carefully. He finally



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led him to a smooth beach, giving the butt so that the spring of the rod kept a uniform and gentle tension, holding up the fish's head so that his struggles caused him to travel slowly and surely from the water to a quiet rest high up on the beach.

“Good work!”

He was not alone, for the two Lons, as he named to himself this matched pair, were more than filling the cabin doorway, from which they had artlessly watched and enjoyed his morning diversions.

After breakfast, when Hardy was considering a natural and easy opening of the subject of his mission, Alonzo was moved by the morning's event to be communicative.

“That fly-rod was left by a young feller who was here a spell ago. You can handle it, but he could n't. He was all for fly-fishin': I took him to the creek and he kep' me a-climbin' trees for his leader all day. Could n't get his flies in the water very often, and I told him he



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stood to ketch more birds than fish. Nothin' would do but I must take him where he could fly-fish from a boat, so I put the raider over my head and took him to Round Pond. I set in the stern and paddled with him in the bow, facin' forrad. He throwed a fly with his whole body and kep' the gunwales dippin', but whenever he drawed back to throw I flatted the blade of my paddle on the water and managed to keep her right side up. Then he said his legs cramped and he wanted to stan' up."

"Stan' up in a 'leven-foot boat!" Mrs. Lon chorused.

"I told him I was willin' to try it if he was, and we done it, but it was a chore. I spattd the flat of the paddle on the water, first on one side of the boat and then on the other, until I was about to give it up, when he sot down and said I did n't seem to know how to hold a boat stiddy for a man that was fly-castin'. Said I let the boat roll so 's 't he could n't do real fine work. Pretty soon he had a new idee, for he



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was pretty near crazy, seein' the trout bilin' all around us and jumpin' for his flies, that were most of the time tangled or caught in the back of his shirt. He said he could put a fly jest where he wanted to, if he could only set where his feet wa'n't cramped under the forrad deck.

“‘Let me set right up on the deck,’ says he, ‘with my legs hangin’ over forrad, and I’ll show you how to ketch them fish!’

“‘No, you won’t,’ says I, for I was ’most beginnin’ to get mad.

“‘Be you a coward?’ says he.”

“Ast Lon if he was a coward!” chorused Mrs. Lon with indescribable scorn.

“‘No, I ain’t a coward,’ says I; ‘you set there, damn you!’ So he slid his feet forrad and sot on the deck, and I folded my arms and smoked my pipe, and the boat went bottom side up, as of course I knew it would. He come up, holdin’ his rod.

“‘Can you swim?’ says he.

“‘No, I can’t,’ says I, ‘but you keep away from



## THE LOVERS OF THE WOODS

me and go to the bottom or go ashore, I don't care which.' So he swum off and I straddled my boat and paddled ashore with my hands."

Again Mrs. Alonzo was anxious to show off her partner. "You did n't let your pipe go out, did you, Lon?"

"No, my pipe did n't go out, but it was as much as that 'leven-foot boat could do to keep it dry. It's rather light for me."

Lon had himself made the opening and a few minutes later he no longer owned the eleven-foot-bottom carry-boat.

The oars were laid in the boat, with the handles forward and the blades aft, and tied fast with buckskin thongs. The yoke was set in its notches inside each gunwale and made fast with thongs. Hardy tucked his hat and coat under the forward deck and then carefully imitated the form he had watched but had never before attempted. He stood at the starboard side and, leaning over the boat, grasped the port gunwale with his right hand, the starboard gun-



## THE TWO LONS

wale with his left hand, and lightly lifted the boat over his head. When the yoke nestled to a firm bearing on his shoulders, he cheerfully said good-bye and strode off on the trail with a confident feeling that everything was all right. Before he had gone a quarter of a mile he believed that he had reached the limit of human endurance. He was partly suffocated, but he rested and thought about it. His too free swinging had often shifted the yoke against his neck and checked a free circulation, which he very much needed. After many experiments he learned to carry easily, and although he was tired, he was not at all exhausted as he stepped carefully down the hill to the bend in the river. He found a great deal of pleasure and just a little annoyance in meeting John there.

“Why did you follow me, John? I wanted to do this all alone.”

“And so you did, Mr. Hardy, and I see you done it well. I knew you ’d do it, but I was



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a little anxious about your carryin' the boat. It's easy to strain an ankle or break a leg under that kind of load, and I thought it would do no harm if I happened along in case of accidents."

"Before I came up here," said Hardy, "Colonel Warren told me a story of being watched in this same way when he wanted to be alone.

"Said he :

" ' When I had been in the woods long enough to have some confidence in my woodcraft, I used to leave my guide in camp and hunt alone. My wife felt anxious about this, but instead of remonstrating with me, she made a private arrangement with my guide, George, so that it was extra money in his pocket always to know where I was. I ought to have guessed it, once when I was coming back on my course and ran on to him and he said he had come out to pick spruce-gum to send home to the children ; and another time when he explained that he was looking for huckleberries. This was in Oc-



## THE TWO LONS

tober, but I was dull. One morning I laid out enough work for him at the camp to keep him busy, as I thought, most of the day. I hunted, traveling very slowly, for perhaps two or three hours, and in following an old lumber-road came up a hill to a hard-wood flat, where the road was straight for a quarter of a mile. It was a beautiful vista, all the more beautiful because I could make out a deer at the end of it. I stepped along very quietly, perhaps half the distance, and what I had imagined to be a deer had not moved. I went still nearer and sat down on an old skidway. It is wonderful how a bunch of leaves or a rotten stump will deceive a deer-hunter. I looked back down the long straight road and fairly caught George this third time. He came on as still as a cat, and as he sat down beside me he whispered, "Why don't you shoot?"

"I was annoyed, both because I now knew that he had followed me and also because my dear old guide was failing, and capable of being



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mistaken and foolish. I showed him and proved to him that the dark line which he had mistaken for a deer's back, with the light bunch of color which he had mistaken for the deer's tail, was at least nine feet high from the ground, and that nine-foot deer were not common in these woods, and that, moreover, it had not moved for fifteen minutes. He said that if he was all alone here with a rifle he would put a hole through the bunch and then go and see what had happened. This annoyed me exceedingly, and I presume I raised my voice sharply when I answered that twenty-three other stark crazy idiots killed last season twenty-three innocent men, mistaking them for deer. At this, our deer lifted up a pair of horns with five prongs each, and George said, "He is a good one for o' course he's nine foot high." " "



## THE PRAIRIE BOY

“SEE the young patridges under that bunch of striped maples,” said John.

“Two, three, four, five of ’em, and probably as many more that we can’t see. See! See! Can you see them?”

“No,” said Hardy, “I can’t make them out.”

“They ’re scatterin’ now, holdin’ their heads low and creepin’ away under cover. The old hen ’ll show pretty soon a few rods off and appear to be terribly crippled. There she is now, ahead on the trail.”

“I see her,” said Hardy, “trailing one wing and walking lame. She does not seem to have a whole bone in her body. She wants either pity or pursuit, and she does not care which, anything to coax us to go away and leave her little family alone, but it is strange that I could not see the covey. Where were they? Nearly



## THE LOVERS OF THE WOODS

all the undergrowth around here is young maple and witch hopple, and I did not know where to look."

"But," said John, "that 's the only bunch of *striped* maple in sight. Now look at it close and learn to know it. It does n't grow to be much of a tree ; I call it a shrub, for I never knew it to grow to more than three or four inches thick. It 's a soft, brittle wood and seems to have a short life, but I 'm not sure about it. Of course, you can't identify it by its size, for there 's plenty of moose maple and young hard maple that 's just as small, but you can learn to know the leaf, soon as you see it, for it 's dull-finished, while the other maple leaves are bright and look as if they was varnished ; and besides, look at the bark. It has stripes like bed-tickin'."

"What is it good for, John ? "

"The leaf is good for inflammation and swellin's, when you can't find anything better, and it 's always handy in the summer time. The wood makes a fine soft charcoal, the best woods pen-



## THE PRAIRIE BOY

cil in the world. The lumbermen use it for markin' logs, because it 's always easy to get, and the marks don't rub out. Now look at this moose maple. The bark is gray, and you 'll always know it. See how tender it is. See that clump where all the tender tops are bit off by deer. The deer must have been here over a week ago, for the ends are dried. Moose maple and tender tops of wild-raspberry bushes saved my life once."

"How was that, John?"

"'T was a good while ago, when I was quite a small boy. I reckon I was n't more 'n twelve years old when my father sent me out to bring in some clean clothes. I knew the trail and got home all right. Next day when I started back, two lumbermen went with me and they said they knew a short cut through the woods. At noon we stopped and ate all our lunch, and the men began to drink whiskey and would n't move. I could n't leave 'em, for I did n't know where I was. They sang and I cried. We



## THE LOVERS OF THE WOODS

stayed there all night and in the mornin' the men drank more whiskey, and got bewildered. We tramped all day with nothin' to eat and laid out another night. The third day we kep' movin' until one of the men gave out and we left him by a brook where he could get water. That night I got afraid of the other man, for we were both nearly starvin' and he kep' lookin' at me. I stole away from him at daylight on the fourth day, while he was sleepin', and followed the brook all day, wherever I could walk. I ate moose maple and raspberry tips and drank water. 'T was after dark when I heard a dog bark, and 't was the best sound I ever heard. Seemed like a good while before I got to the house ; my clothes was tore to pieces and I was wild ; but I told them there was two men up the creek starvin' to death and then the woman took care of me. She was very kind, and at first wanted me to eat pie, but of course I could n't."

"What did you eat first, John ? "



## THE PRAIRIE BOY

"I don't know. I was sick a good while, and they said I kep' askin' for moose maple.

"I'm a-thinkin', Mr. Hardy, you'll do well to learn to know timber trees by their bark as well as by their leaves, for more 'n half the time you have n't got the hard-wood leaves to go by. Of course you'll always know the beech, for it's gray and white spotted, young or old, always the same, but yellow birch may bother you at first, for it has so many kinds of bark. Most of the big ones have a shaggy curl that looks as if it was just goin' to fall off, but some of them have no curl, just flat scales, like fish scales; only they are three or four inches long. And the young birch is silver-gray and satiny, but sometimes it is red as cherry for its first few years. I don't know why.

"The hard-maple bark cracks into narrer straps and sometimes looks a little like black ash, but you'll always know black ash because it grows in swamps and most always has moss spots, and not always on the north side either.



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All the trees are fitted with a nice smooth coat of bark when they are young, but the wood keeps a-growin' inside, and the bark keeps a-stretchin' and crackin'. They aint like growin' boys; no matter how big they get, they never get a new coat.

"Hemlock bark is so thick that it cracks deep and looks like pine, but balsam bark is thinner and has strong grains that run around the tree as well as up and down, so it stretches easy and does n't crack at all; and you 'll always know it by the blue-gray color, and the blisters, and the smell, and by the four or five branches that start out the same height from the ground. You can always tell a balsam from a spruce or a hemlock way off, by its sharp-pointed top. It's easy to learn 'em all, and then you 've got somethin' to go by."

"I had no chance," said Hardy, "to learn trees when I was a boy, but Professor Graves has told me how they grow, and it is interesting. Of course you know that a new ring of wood is



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made every year between the bark and the old wood. The roots gather sap, which is water with all sorts of raw food-material in it. The sap is pumped up to the leaves through the small pipe lines, or ducts, in the sap wood. Of course water does not run up hill without help. The pipe lines are filled with cells and partitions. I do not fully understand the process by which the sap is drawn up, but it is called 'osmosis.' None of it goes up in the heart wood. The sap is digested in the leaves by a peculiar chemical process. The leaves absorb carbonic acid gas from the air, and the green coloring matter, helped by the light, separates and sets free the oxygen and uses the carbon to digest the food in the sap. The digested sap then travels down the ducts in the inner bark, and all the way down it is distributed to feed a layer of living cells, called *Cambium*, which lie between the bark and the wood. As these cells are fed they swell up and divide, and swell and divide again until there is an enormous number of them; and their walls



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thicken and they stick together and make the cell structure of the new wooden ring.

“Of course you can see that the better they are fed the fatter they will grow, for they are just like your baby trout, so that in a good year the new wood ring may be twice as thick as in another year. It depends on the rains and the soil, and on the amount of sunlight the leaves get. When trees are close together the lower limbs die, because the sun cannot get at their leaves and keep up the digesting process. The lower limbs starve to death. Then the tree’s only chance for life is to race up to where the light is, and it grows spindling.”

“I ’m glad you told me that,” said John, “but I ought to have found it out —long as I ’ve been in these woods. It accounts for a plant’s dyin’ when bugs eat off the leaves. Mr. Hardy, can you see a reddish spot in the long grass by the river, about eighty rod, just at the left of the tallest tamarack? Now it’s movin’ and of course you can see it. It’s a pretty big deer,



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though he looks small at that distance. Our trail leads back in the woods from here and comes out pretty near to where he is. If we go quiet, perhaps he 'll stay and give us a nearer look at him."

The wind was right and Hardy had his first chance to study a deer from near-by. It was a buck "in the red coat," with horns "in the velvet," and to Hardy his most notable accomplishment was his ability to extend his neck. When he reached for a tender top, the neck seemed absurdly disproportionate to the length of his body, and he looked like a giraffe. He was continually alert. He put his head in the shallow water and drew out by the roots a bunch of deer grass, which he carefully rinsed first and then ate only the tender parts. He was dainty and he wanted variety. He studied the trees and occasionally nipped a bud. Where a spring was oozing from the bank he found the celandine and ate it, flowers, leaves, and stem. But he was not dining quietly, for he was quiver-



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ing with fear, always watching, listening, and smelling for unknown dangers. His ears and nostrils were even more occupied and active than his eyes, and at frequent intervals he put up his head and studied everything far and near. "A deer's ears," said John, "are his surest protection. He can depend on his nose only when the wind is right. His eyesight is no better than ours, perhaps not so good; besides, he can't see when he's asleep; but he's never so sound asleep that he can't hear a footstep or a snappin' twig. After he drops his horns about Christmas, he is dull and gets poor, and of course the does are quiet and get poor. Now, the new horns are growin' out and hardenin' and the does are sucklin' the fawns, and all hands are doin' their level best to get fat and strong enough to last through the winter, when the snow is deep and they have to paw a good while to get a mouthful. Now is the best time of the year to see deer, because the deer-grass and lilypads tempt 'em into the open, even in the daytime;



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though naturally they rest daytime and eat at night. Toward the end of August, the food that grows in water will be too tough to suit 'em, and they 'll work in the hard-wood flats for sheep-sorrel and tender plants. In September they shed the red hairs, and the velvet from the horns, and come out with smooth horns and a blue-gray glossy winter coat. Later they paw for beech-nuts and get fat, and in November they are on the ridges, fightin' for their lives, and for their mates."

A woodsman is an accurate observer of facts, and his few mistakes are apt to be made when he mixes them with inferences. John should have known that the deer's eye is a larger and more powerful seeing machine than ours, and that he sorely needs this slight advantage in competing with the man who is looking for him. The hunter is trained, as is the deer, by practice, but he has also the tremendous advantage of a fund of knowledge got from words spoken and written. Nearly all that has ever



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been learned of the habits of wild animals is available to him, while the deer's ancestors have left no records. The deer gets something from the past which we call a mysterious instinct. It seems to consist of accidental developments of power, and habits of avoidance of danger, perpetuated because those of his kind that have not happened to develop them have met early death.

The hunter is looking intensely and carefully for one thing. The deer is looking for food and for all the dangers of which he has inherited fear, or which he may have learned to fear during his two years of living. Even terms in the matter of seeing would require that the hunted one should have power of vision many times quicker and longer than the hunter has. But seeing power has comparatively little to do with it. The photographer learns that a cheap lens is nearly as quick, but not nearly so accurate, as a more costly one. Effective seeing means definition and understanding. It needs



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knowledge, and the deer's knowledge is slight. He is no mean botanist, geologist, and weather prophet, but his attainments are wonderful only when we consider that they are got in a few years full of trouble. He may never before have seen a man, and at the first seeing he does not always run from him, although those best fitted to survive generally do run from any strange object that seems to be capable of motion. The fact that most deer are not startled at seeing a man sitting or standing quietly, when they have no means of knowing that he is dangerous, is often mistakenly interpreted to mean that man's eyesight is better than that of a deer. John did not speak of the deer's yearly miseries in the late winter and early spring ; when deep snow softens and freezes and traveling is difficult ; when almost the only obtainable food is the few balsam and hemlock or cedar tips that can be reached ; and when weak deer die of starvation and the lives of strong ones are shortened. It is "yarding" season ; not that misery



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loves company, but the hungry, miserable creatures huddle in the swamps, where the snow does not drift and where some protection and a little food can be got. Fewer deer are shot in any year than are "winter-killed" in a bad-weather season.

It is pitiful, this suffering and decimation, and it seems at first to be a fault of Nature's ordering that the power to store up food for a hard winter should not have been given to them. But possibly, having this power, they would crowd the woods and disturb the delicate balance, as the trout would fill the river and overflow it if all their eggs should produce full-grown fish. Nevertheless, when we interfere, and shoot part of the deer, we can well help to protect those that are left. Colonel Soper, a true lover of the woods with a heart full of pity, was once with difficulty restrained from sending in trainloads of bales of hay and having them dragged about and distributed where deer are yarding in hard winters. It would have been a useless



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and probably a dangerous experiment, but the suggestion is inspiring. Surely it would not be difficult to travel on snow-shoes with an axe through the valleys and swamps and, in likely places, cut down young balsams and hemlocks. These are natural food, and the axe easily puts them within reach. Winter-killing might be nearly stopped, but the greater benefit would be the increased strength of the survivors. There would be fewer barren does if they were better fed.

“I suppose,” said Hardy, “the number of points on each horn tells the age exactly?”

“I don’t think so, but of course I ’m not sure. I know only one certain case where it was n’t true. I was pretty well acquainted with a small-bodied buck for more’n two years, and every time I saw him he had five points on each horn, and he must have been gettin’ older all that time.”

That evening after supper they were as usual by the bonfire, and were quietly smoking. The



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firelight on the trees gave the effect of an exact semicircle in front of them, which grew smaller and smaller as the fire died down, and suddenly expanded and doubled in a startling fashion when John occasionally kicked the logs together or threw on spruce boughs. There were long pauses in the conversation, but the brook always tinkled. They were good camping partners and loved to talk, but both had learned to give the musical brook and the playing firelight a chance, while they mused.

“You was n’t used to this before you come here, Mr. Hardy?”

“No, I am a prairie boy. These are the only woods and mountains I ever saw, and I have been thinking of your story of getting lost when you were a boy.”

“Of course you can’t get lost on a prairie?”

“Yes, on the prairie as it was before the cornfields came, you could get lost and get hungry, and have all the hardships and dangers, especially prairie fire.”



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"Tell me about that," said John ; " I never saw a prairie, for I never was away from these woods, except during the War."

There was a long pause, while the brook talked, and then Hardy slowly began, measuring his words and trying to make clear to John conditions that were entirely novel to him.

"A good many years ago, a little boy in northern Illinois became possessed of a single-barrelled, muzzle-loading shot-gun. He loved it and petted it because it was all his own. He could not hold it out and sight it without a rest, but as he grew stronger and a little older and could use it, he became ambitious to try it on real game. He thought that perhaps his chance had come when his father was planning to go with a friend to the big marsh for a few days' duck-shooting. He made himself as useful as possible in the preparations. He casually mentioned that he could build a fire and could boil potatoes. He had the good luck to be able to remind his father that, in the stock of ammuni-



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tion, percussion-caps had been forgotten. This was, to the old sportsman, impressive thoughtfulness, and it led him to ask the boy if he would like to go along. The boy had what you call buck-fever, for he had arrived at the highest peak of his hopes. He had to swallow once or twice before he could say yes.

“The marsh was a few miles wide and many miles long and was about twenty miles from the village. After leaving the fringe of farms, the wide upland prairie, only a few feet above the water-level, had no houses or roads. You traveled entirely by landmarks, a distant meeting-house spire or some one of the few groves of trees that showed on the horizon-line. The knee-high prairie grass and the longer reeds in the marsh made nearly a dead level, so that the marsh line was only a color line.

“Tenting on the hard ground at the edge of the swamp was easy and comfortable, barring one drawback. There was not much firewood except dead willow-twigs, and these had to be



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economized. The sportsmen left the little boy alone in the tent every morning about four o'clock and went a mile or so into the marsh to locate a fly-way and get the morning shooting. They also went out in the afternoon for the evening shooting, and of course did not get back to camp until after dark.

“The first day there were no ducks. The second day a few were seen, but none were killed. The third day two things happened: the ducks moved in great numbers, the shooting was good and it promised to be very good, but the provisions of flour, bacon, and potatoes gave out. Apparently the sportsmen had not counted on the boy's appetite and his great opportunities to learn how to cook when left alone in camp.

“Probably few sportsmen were ever driven to leave good shooting for such a little matter as lack of variety in food. These men stayed and ate roast duck for their breakfast. They also ate roast duck for dinner. They tried to eat



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it for supper, but they could n't do it ; they had had enough duck. Next morning they made a measly breakfast on fried livers. At noon it was broiled gizzards ; and, from then out, the only part of a duck they had stomach for was the gizzard roasted in the coals hard and black. A man cannot live on ducks, and parched gizzards, carried in his pockets, just barely beat nothing.

“Stray flocks of ducks now occasionally flew near the tent, and one evening when the little boy was alone, he went into the marsh as far as he dared to go and got a few chances to miss. The sun had gone down and his attention was attracted by the wonderful afterglow. The whole western horizon was a rich dull red. It was magnificently beautiful, even to an unobservant little boy. A little later, when he looked, it had crept higher and grown brighter. It occurred to him that the sun had changed its mind and was coming back. He had an unaccountable feeling that something was wrong.



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The color now increased more rapidly until he believed he could see a fringe of smoke above the glow, and finally the truth dawned on him. He had never been near a prairie fire, but he knew it by tradition, and this was a great one and coming directly on him.

“He flew, as fast as a very small bog-trotter could fly, from the marsh to the tent. The fire-line was well in sight and extended right and left as far as he could see. His only thought was to run, and the only thing that kept him from running was the conviction that he could neither run around it nor before it. He was baffled, so he threw himself on his face and cried.

“I think that this soothed and steadied him, for there gradually came into his poor little addled memory the stories he had heard of fighting fire. He looked again, and there was no time to be lost. From around the tent he tore up the grass by the roots until his hands were cut and bleeding. It was too slow. He could never



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do it. He could hear the fire now, and the air began to be filled with flying prairie birds. He could hear, and occasionally see, wolves running past, and one almost brushed him as it ran between him and the tent.

“When he recalled what little he had heard of back-firing, it was none too soon; it was almost too late. He brought a blanket from the tent and carefully fired the grass on the windward side. By thrashing with his blanket he tried to control and guide his fire so as to burn a swath around the tent. He had just succeeded in this and was singed and choked and utterly exhausted, when the great hissing, snapping prairie-fire enveloped the spot he had burned over.

“The top of the fire went by him like a race horse. The under part was slower, and it seemed as if it would never leave him. Then he had a paroxysm of sobbing and screaming. He had no shame in it — perhaps because there was no one to see; and besides, he was only a



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very ordinary little boy, not very bright and not very courageous. His father was probably burned up, and he had nothing but gizzards to eat. He was miserable and lonesome.

“However, it finally occurred to him that he had work to do. It was dark, and on the chance that his father had escaped the fire he must be signalled into camp. He naturally thought of firing his gun, which he did, and then he thought that a beacon light would be better, but there was now no grass in the region and he was slow in remembering the grass bedding inside the tent. He was dazed and sluggish in his mind, but at last he got an armful of the bedding and twisted wisps of it, which he lighted and flared, at what he tried to make regular intervals. Finally, it seemed like many hours, he got a signal, two shots from his father’s gun, and not very long after he heard his father’s voice.

“What occurred just after this the boy does not know. His reason gave way under the strain,



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for, as I said, he was not an unusually bright little boy."

Without a sound John left the fire and stood for a long time by the tinkling brook. When he came back into the light his voice was unsteady. He said: "Poor little cuss. I guess I know how you felt."



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FOR twenty years Colonel Robert Warren had not missed his spring fishing-trip to the woods in May, and John had never failed to meet him during this outing, as his guide, mentor, and friend. To John it had grown to be the most important event of the year, and in all his tramps during the early spring he kept a watchful eye for likely water for the Colonel's fishing and for beautiful spots to gladden the Colonel's artistic eye. To the Colonel it was even more important, and his planning and preparation began long beforehand.

Mrs. Warren had become accustomed to note the first symptoms of restlessness in February or March, when her Robert brought from his closet and hung in his study a small canvas side-bag, which contained his fly-book, leader



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box, reel, compass, file, pincers, cork-screw, can-opener, buckskin thongs, tar oil, adhesive plaster, bandage roll, safety pins, drinking-cup, and other things. This "ditty bag" had acquired, during its years of service in camp, an odor of balsam, with a blend of smoke, tar oil, fish, and a powerful reminder of fried bacon. The Colonel loved it, and Mrs. Warren always knew when it was hung in the study. The sight of it or the smell of it was usually a sufficient diversion for a few weeks, until at odd times during an evening he would overhaul the flies, and one at a time, hesitatingly, regretfully, throw in the fire those that were frazzled or unreliable. This was a slow process and often a painful one, for each old lure was a reminiscence.

It was hard to part with a Montreal, a Split Ibis, a Reuben Wood, a Black Hackle, or a Lord Baltimore, that had served him well; while the Grizzly King, that had held for five minutes and then lost the biggest trout he ever saw,



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ought to be kept, as a hair shirt, to remind him of his utter worthlessness. He loved these pangs, but he was too good a fisherman to allow his fly-book to hold anything unsound, so the fire burned up all the old leaders and flies. There had been a time in his life when he had been accustomed to make presents of old flies and old leaders to young fishermen, and to accompany the gifts with stories of their tried value. He did not do this any more, because as he grew older he learned to love young fishermen.

He made a list of all that was needed, and corrected it, added to it and cut out from it, until it grew to be a complete accompaniment to the rod for the spring campaign. He cared for his own rod, and the work of making its numerous slight repairs was distributed over many days. After an evening of work or reading he liked to turn to it and fuss over it for a few minutes.

This season his engagements had detained him,



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and, as his trip was postponed from week to week, John grew anxious and the Colonel fretted until early in July he appeared at the hatchery. He hugged Hardy and patted John. He shouted, sang, and quoted poetry, meanwhile noting with his keen, experienced eye every change in and about the hatchery, the brook, and the surrounding trees. He shouted :

“ I have brought you six feet and four inches and two hundred and forty pounds of bad health and low spirits, John ! ”

“ I ’d never ’a’ knowed it, Colonel, but we’ll make it two hundred and ten pounds and high spirits in about a week. We ’ve got plenty of black flies to bleed you, and you’ve got me to tramp with ; that makes two reducers ; and you ’ll drink a little tamarack tea every night and mornin’ ; that ’ll cure your dyspepsia and give you an appetite.”

“ That is good, John. It is what I came here for, but I have an idea that you can condense the medical treatment into one sweet moment of



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medicinal bliss if you will scrape a little of the tender bark of the mountain ash and make an extract with two ounces of whiskey. Two ounces of spring water and a lump of sugar mixed with this in a tin cup and handed to me will blind me to your few faults, and, —

“ ‘I’ll take no care, though the weather prove fair,  
And reck not e’en though it rain.  
We’ll banish all sorrow, and wait for the morrow,  
And angle, and angle again.’ ”

The Colonel roared through the fishing song with a deep and not unmusical voice that seemed to shake the walls. He had pride in his voice’s volume, although he was accustomed to call it untrained.

“I’m a-thinkin’, Colonel,” said John, in the evening, “that you’ll want to start for the Wilderness camp to-morrow mornin’?”

“Not until after breakfast. We will wait here just long enough for that, but have it early. George will go along and take care of me, while you give Mr. Hardy a good time; so you will



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need to lay out four days' provisions for four men. Are you equal to doing that, John, without waste and without running short? I know you are; you never failed, but I should like to know how you guess so closely."

"There's only one thing I have to guess about, and that's how many fish'll come into the fryin'-pan. The rest is easy. When we have cakes for breakfast, one pound of flour is enough for four or five men, or about half as many boys, and a half a pint of ground coffee will satisfy 'em. Besides that, I generally allow for each man two ounces of maple syrup; an ounce of white sugar; a quarter of a pound of bacon; a third of a pound-and-a-quarter loaf of bread; a quarter of a pound of butter; a quarter of a can of milk; two potatoes and a tablespoonful of tea a day. Pepper, salt, and baking powder don't weigh much, so we take enough."

"That makes it very simple," said Colonel Warren, "but you do not take into consider-



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ation the abnormal capacity of a man who has been waiting for this for nearly a year."

"Yes, I've heard a good deal about the 'woods appetite' and have seen city men start in with one that ought to make their hair curl. Sometimes we need a pound and a half or two pounds of flour, first mornin' out, but everything gits down to an everidge in a few days. That mechanical engineer who was here with you two years ago 'lowed that he begun by pushin' his furnace beyond his boiler capacity."

"I had heard much before I came here," said Hardy, "about the effect of this out-door life on the appetite. I was told that a man could eat anything, and in large quantity, and enjoy it. I have eaten John's provisions, of his cooking; other people's provisions, of their cooking; and, I am sorry to say, some of my own cooking; and I am inclined to think that the woods appetite is not a coarse desire. It is rather a sharpened sense of what the body needs. If a man knows what good food and good cook-



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ing are, he longs for them when he is healthily hungry."

"My dear boy," said Colonel Warren, "I am proud of your rapid progress in woodcraft. It took me years to learn that the best there is is none too good for me. It is the first one of the thirty-nine articles, and the second one is, go to bed early.

" 'A bower quiet for us, and a sleep  
Full of sweet dreams and health, and quiet breathing.  
Therefore, on every morrow are we wreathing  
A flowery band to bind us to the earth,  
Spite of despondences of the inhuman dearth  
Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,  
Of all the unhealthy and o'erdarken'd days  
Made for our searching.' "

The Colonel recited perfectly, without the fault of over expression, and, as Hardy lay awake for a time that evening, perhaps because of the excitement of meeting his oldest and best friend, he thought lightly of his own "o'erdarken'd days" that were past. His room at the hatchery overhung the brook, where the current was



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partly choked by boulders, where the water always sang him to sleep, and to-night it sang hopefully.

The train which started on the trail next morning was impressive. First, a portly form carrying a pack-basket neatly covered with water-proof canvas, and a cover buckled down tight. No camping partner ever became so intimate with the Colonel as to dare explore the mysteries of his pack. Hardy followed him, easily carrying his heavy load, while John and George followed with the boats, which looked like huge, shining water-beetles.

It was a long trail to Wilderness camp, but, as the Colonel expressed it, "The centre of isolation is worth working for." It was a "closed camp ;" externally simply a log-house, but its interior fittings and furnishings had been to John and to Colonel Warren a continual study for many years, until it was an ideal headquarters from which to make one and two day trips in regions not desecrated by tourists. Hardy was



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learning to use his eyes, and while he observed the mice-proof closets, the bough beds on poles raised above the floor, and the generous expanse of shelves for a sportsman's belongings, he also noted the peculiarities of construction.

"You used split balsam poles for shingle lath," said he. "I did not know that that lumber had any use."

"And yet," said Colonel Warren, "you see it is still sound there, where it has done its work for twelve years. Outside of the woods its use as lumber is often fraudulent. The mills cut it into siding and 'mix it in' with spruce siding, with intent to deceive the house-builder, and as George says, it stays sound just a little longer than it takes to nail it on. Like hemlock, it does not decay when it is protected from the weather, but it is not strong enough to be used, as is hemlock, for house-frames. Its grain is always straight and it splits easily, and makes a splendid floor when you can't get a better one. It is the woodsman's tree, for medicine, bough-



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beds, benches, table-tops, floors, and generally useful. I am inclined to think, too, that it is a part of the scheme of Nature that balsam fir has not had much commercial value, so that lumbermen have left it here. It is the one ever-green that thrives abundantly on low flats, where its shade is especially needed to protect the sponge. ‘They also serve who only stand and wait.’ ”

In his youth the Colonel had had strong opinions about those who were content to cast from a boat rowed by a guide. He preferred, as he still preferred, to walk alone in the stream, looking for beautiful pictures, as well as for deep pools where he could drop his fly gently as a snowflake. But years and weight had changed his habits, and George was not at all surprised at the suggestion that they should row up the Stillwater and examine the mouths of some spring-brooks where the trout might be lying in the spring-holes, while John should walk down stream with Hardy and see what devel-



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oped in the pools below the rifts. Spring-hole fishing was at its best, and no one knew, better than George knew, how to handle a boat in swift water, or when wind was blowing, so that the fisherman could first cast carefully around the edges of the incoming cold water and pick off the outside trout; and whenever one was fastened, move the boat gently away so that the skilful Colonel could play and capture his trout without alarming the others.

“It’s jest like robbin’ a hen-roost,” said George, “If you want’ em all, don’t take the inside ones first.”

The Colonel was soon satisfied; supper and breakfast were provided for, when there happened the sad event that rarely fails to come to every fisherman every fishing-day — he lost the biggest one. Most of us have watched the biggest trout in the pool, cooling his side by a submerged rock or protected by a root, holding as by right the most desirable water, quietly alert and lazily dignified. The choicest



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morsels float to him, and when he marks them for his own the other trout keep away. He may be a quarter-pounder or a three-pounder; he is lordly and pompous simply because he is relatively big. When the great head broke the water the Colonel's rod snapped back responsively.

"I have got the alderman, George! I knew he was there, but I was just about to go away because we have enough."

Possibly some fishermen look at a watch when they fasten, for the reports of time taken for playing a trout are often precise, but the Colonel did not do so, and he might have had five minutes or fifteen minutes of pleasurable anxiety when the fish showed his great size near the boat. A good guide never loses his enthusiasm!

"If you lose that one, Colonel, I'll hide your pack-basket!"

"There is only one chance to lose him now. He is on the dropper and there are two flies



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trailing below, looking for a log or a root—and, holy smoke ! they 've got it ! ”

A few violent throbs, and the fish was lost. Not a word was spoken as the line was reeled in and George rowed home. Colonel Warren was accustomed to maintain the proposition that good fishermen do not swear.

Two men who know how to do it make quick work of the preparations for comfort for a night in camp. Long experience and keen observation, coupled with a naturally strong inclination to secure results with the least possible labor, enabled George to get a generous supply of firewood by the time Colonel Warren had freshened the bough-beds. Among the many decayed spruce trees in the woods there are always some with limbs saturated with rosin so that they resist decay. George never failed to find near camp some of these tough, dry “horns,” which are easily gathered and serve for kindling and quick heat.

The nearest hemlock stub always caught his



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eye. These brittle timber trees, with massive evergreen foliage, are often caught by heavy winds and the tops are twisted off, leaving a "stub" that quickly dies and its thick resinous bark hangs loosely or falls off in great slabs. It produces probably a more intense heat than any other natural fuel found in the woods. For welding iron it is a good substitute for charcoal, and for jerking venison or for broiling or making toast it is incomparable.

Everything was tidy, supper was ready to be cooked, and they waited. At dark they lighted the bonfire and still waited for John and Hardy. Supper time is an uncertain appointment for a hunter or a fisherman, and it was long after dark when John's shining face appeared in the firelight. He was in a glow; his story could not wait.

"Colonel, Mr. Hardy ain't a tenderfoot. He's a fisherman after your own heart. You ought to see him jump the boulders and go through swift water. When he gits hold of a fish,



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nothin' stops him. We've got somethin' to show you ! ”

“ That is all right, John. He got my heart a good while ago and he has running gear something like a katydid, as I used to have, but he looks as if he should have been web-footed. Better get him into dry clothes.”

“ Oh, Colonel, just look at that,” said Hardy, drawing from his basket a two-pound trout.

“ Is n't he worth living for ? But I can't live up to him ! This is the beginning of living ! Everything dates from to-day ! ”

“ We went clean down to the Grindstone,” said John, “ and Mr. Hardy was out in the middle of the river, and — ”

“ I saw a rise,” said Hardy ; “ in a hole near the farther shore, and I worried through a pretty stiff current to a boulder where I could reach him.”

“ And he made a long cast and dropped the fly like a feather, and the big fellow took it and threwed himself slick and clean out of water,



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and Mr. Hardy struck him so hard that he threwed himself plumb into the river."

"No, I only slipped off the boulder, and when I got straightened up —"

"About two rod below," said John.

"Yes, that is where I lost my hat. I had to follow him, for he just tore down stream."

"A rollin' and a swimmin' and a tryin' to wade! I was runnin' 'long the bank, and every time Mr. Hardy's head went under, his hand went up, a-holdin' the rod, but I could hear the reel sing, so, of course, I knowed the trout was all right."

"Then I came to deep water," said Hardy.

"Yes, in the pool below the Grindstone, and he swum ashore, a-holdin' the rod up clean out of water."

"When I got ashore, the binding ring at the butt of the rod slipped down and the reel fell to the ground."

"And I picked up the reel and put it in my pocket, and, says I, Mr. Hardy, you gimme that rod, and you watch that trout!"



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“And I saw the trout leave the pool and run through a chink between two boulders that touched each other above water, so that John could not follow him.”

“‘And,’ says I, ‘Mr. Hardy, I’ll stay right here and hold him while you go below and gill him.’”

“Wise guide!” roared Colonel Warren.

“Pretty dry one, so far,” said George.

“It was deep below the two boulders,” said Hardy; “but I went in carefully and could see him, pretty well tired out. That encouraged me, for I was getting tired myself. It was so deep that, when I stooped down to reach him, my head went under water.”

“Soused in three times!” said John, “before he come up with both hands gripped on the trout. ‘Throw him ashore!’ I yelled, and —”

“Now stop, John,” said Colonel Warren.

“Your generalship has been perfect, and you are dry. A sportsman should be proud to serve



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under so wise and canny a guide, but get dry clothes for Mr. Hardy at once and dose him and feed him."

Sitting by the fire after supper, Colonel Warren said :

"I suppose, of course, my boy, you lost your biggest trout and had your grief before you had the swimming race that John umpired?"

"I lost a big one, and it was my fault. I felt bitterly ashamed and wanted to quit, but John said —"

"Says I, 'Mr. Hardy, you stay right here. Every fisherman does it every day.'"

"Yes," said Colonel Warren, "learn to regard such happenings as purely educational. Let no sorrows come on the stream, or, rather, when they do come, brush them aside."

"Like mosquitoes," said George. "We had rather a quiet ride back from the spring-hole this afternoon, Colonel?"

"Yes, but that loss was not a severe one, although I admit there was a time, as I was



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watching those trailing flies, when I would have given you a new suit of clothes to have had that trout transferred from the dropper to the leader fly."

"When did you first learn," said Hardy, "to mourn not as one without hope when the tail fly weakens?"

Colonel Warren studied the pictures in the live coals during a long pause, and the others were content to wait. They knew that, in time, he would speak, and it occurred to Hardy that the panorama of years of fishing was shimmering through the firelight before the Colonel's eyes.

"I think it was twenty years ago, when I came here for the summer, for my health. I could not find trout, and it gradually became somewhat annoying to me to hear cruel repetitions of tales of extraordinary trout-fishing in days, weeks, or years before I came. One lazy July morning I was sitting on the beach tying new leaders, and George was there watching the process. He was very good at that — at



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watching a process. He finally said : ‘ They ketched a three-pound speckled in Raven Run spring-hole last year.’ Out of the bitterness of my heart I tried to make a melancholy joke about the Raven and Nevermore, but George said : ‘ I don’t believe they ’ve ketched out the biggest ones.’ This was at last something other than history. It pertained to the present and it seemed to point to me.

“ We were soon on the trail, George with the boat, I with my rod and ditty bag, and my little son with his new knife, intent on whistle timber. We boated down the river to near the spring-hole, where I got out and waded. I found a few small trout around the edges, but did not get them because I had not learned to strike promptly. I dropped a fly on the centre of the deepest water and the largest trout-head I had ever seen showed itself to the gills and lazily sank back. My tardy strike was suited to his size, and he was fastened.

“ The boat was out of sight above the bend,



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but I called to George and he heard and started down. I thought I needed help. The trout ran wildly up and down the stream. I did not try to control him, for I was afraid of breaking something. I just wound in line whenever he turned toward me and let him pull it out when he passed me. He passed close to me several times, until I was tempted ; and with one wild scoop of the net I lifted him high in the air. I was in nearly waist-deep water, with a heavy brass-rimmed landing-net in one hand, the rod in the other hand, a pipe in my mouth, and both banks were heavily fringed with alders.

“The net was shallow, and the trout seemed to stand in it on his tail, with that same old head as I had at first seen it, but now projecting high above the brass rim of the landing-net, and thrashing from one side to the other. I was anxious and helpless, but George was hurrying toward me. I presume that I unconsciously helped the trout to jump out of the net, just



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before the boat reached me, by straining on the short line, because I was insanely holding the rod high. Indeed, I think I was holding everything high, rod, net, pipe, and voice. As he jumped out, the snood broke and my first great trout sailed away with a No. 8 Professor fly in his mouth.

“I have lost friends and money, but never before had I experienced a more piercing regret. I went ashore, took down my rod, poured the water out of my shoes and prepared to go home. George spoke words of encouragement, but he had laughed when the trout jumped the net, and I remembered it. Nevertheless, when my little boy put his arm around my neck and said nothing, I jointed up and waded in again. In less than an hour I had that same trout in the boat, with two Professor flies in his mouth, the old one and a new one.

“The following winter I was telling this story to some friends who were visiting us. The little boy was present, and it occurred to me



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to point a moral at the end, for the benefit of the boy, so I added : ‘I am glad to say that, although it was as bitter a disappointment as I ever knew, I did not utter a single profane word.’

“ But the boy said : ‘Oh, papa ! I never heard a man swear so in all my life !’ ”

“ And,” said George, “ I ’ve quit carryin’ an extry fly, with the snood broke off, to hook in a big trout’s mouth as I land him.”



## GEORGE'S MEMORY

COLONEL WARREN had proposed two days of hard work away from the river for the entire party, and they were discussing it at breakfast time.

"Some men," said George, "plan for six months and travel three hundred miles and tramp under a load all day to find fishin', and if they happen to strike it just right, as we 've done, they can't git away from it too quick. There 's a pretty good trout up the Stillwater a-waitin' for you, Colonel, and he give you one chance. Misfortunes generally come single, as the man said when he buried his third wife."

"Perhaps we shall get him some time," said Colonel Warren, "and, if not, I hope someone else may have the pleasure of doing so, for we have plenty of other things to do. There



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are fishermen who go to the woods filled with a desire to kill, and the thirst for blood grows with every fish they catch. They fish while daylight lasts, and in the night as long as trout will bite. The worst of them seem to lose their self-respect, or what to them stands for self-respect, which is little more than a fear of their neighbors' opinions. They 'cut loose' in language and habits. They are liable to drink too much whiskey, and go back from their outing haggard and depressed in body and in mind. They have caught more fish than they can eat, and when they have carried them home and sent them around to the neighbors, they imagine that they are generous, that they have been working in order to give pleasure to their friends, whereas the assassins are simply getting rid of their loot and tickling their own pride. We have enough fish ; let us go up on the mountain."

During the hunting season, George and the Colonel had discovered a mountain pond.



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Doubtless others, and possibly many others, had discovered it before them, but there was now no indication that any person had ever been there. To make an investigation of such an unsullied spot gave the Colonel more pleasure than fine fishing, and to do it thoroughly and comfortably they needed a camp, and he was determined to build a model one. He had never seen — indeed, no one has ever seen — a perfect open camp. They are faced the wrong way for the prevailing winds, so that they are smoky ; or they are too high in front, or too low behind ; or the roof leaks ; or they are badly located for wood, or for water, or for sporting ; or they are too small, or too large ; or the bed is not raised from the ground. Whatever Colonel Warren wanted to do became at once John's chief aim, and they had many times talked over the ways of making the ideal open camp. John proposed :  
“ We'll take a cross-cut saw, an axe, and a few nails along, and build two open camps,



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jest alike, facin' each other, five foot apart, and hev the cookin' fire and the evenin' fire between the two camps. That'll leave jest enough room for the smoke to get away, and hev the fire near enough to keep us warm on a cold night. We've tried most every other spacin' and this is right. When we've got the tools it won't take us much longer to build the two than to build one, and then, no matter which way the wind blows, we've got comfort. But before we build it, we'll find a dry knoll not too near the pond, so 's to scare deer away, and not far from it, so 's to be tiresome. I'd lay three or four tier, dependin' on the size, of eight-foot logs, around three sides for each camp, and then slope up to a seven-foot front. I'd make a tight roof if I had to peel every spruce in sight, and then make a raised floor, fifteen inches from the ground, out of inch-and-a-half spruce poles, so it will be springy, and cover it with hemlock boughs. I'd have the floor stop about a foot and a half



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from the front of each camp, so's to leave a comfortable place to set before the fire. Then we have a choice of sleepin' in either camp, accordin' to the wind, and have plenty of room for the packs and kit."

"The specifications are adopted," said Colonel Warren. "We will take boats with us and get the camp livable to-day, and finish it to-morrow. We will take some spoons, and troll as well as fly-cast the pond this evening, so as to know surely whether or not the trout are native there. To-morrow we will sound it and examine the bottom, and study the weeds and mosses with the magnifying glass to see if there is enough natural food to justify stocking it with trout, in case there are none there already."

"I would n't like to swear —"

"I don't believe you!" George interrupted.

"I would n't like to swear," repeated John, "that there are no trout there, even if they don't come to a hook, 'specially if there's deep water.



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Now, I 'll take along somethin' to test it, and then we 'll know."

"Johnny 's got a gill net, sure, hid away somewhere 'round here," said George.

"Then it must not be used here," said Colonel Warren. "It must go back with us to the hatchery where it belongs. We will do our fishing in a legal way, or not at all."

"Now, Colonel, don't get excited about my gill net. I won't let it catch a fish to be killed. The game law is just as much to me as most of the Ten Commandments. I own it would look bad if some one come along and saw us puttin' it out, but they won't come along here, and there 's lots of things that ain't wicked unless you git ketched. The net is made of fine thread, inch and a quarter bar, nearly a hundred feet long, and, with the leads and floats, the whole thing is only a matter of about thirty pounds. If we fasten one end at the shore, in a good place, and pay out and anchor the other end in deep water, some of the trout, if there



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are any, will be the right size to get gilled in the meshes, and then we 'll know what 's there."

"But if you put out that net at night," said Colonel Warren, "and take it up in the morning, most of the trout that are gilled will be dead."

"Sure they would," said John, "but we won't do that. We 'll set the net at dark, when the trout begin to move, as they always do at night, and I 'll take along a lantern so we can go out in the boat and lift the net and examine it every hour, until about midnight, when we 'll take it up, and I 'll guarantee no fish will be killed, and we 'll know what 's there."

"Very well," said Colonel Warren. "It seems to be in the interest of science, and we observe the spirit of the law. We will take the net along, and may use it carefully."

An hour later they were laboring up the steep mountain-side, heavily loaded with the boats, blankets, kit, and provisions. As they rested, George philosophized :



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“Goin’ up always makes you think how pleasant ’twill be comin’ down. We ain’t like the old woman a-goin’ to town with her market-basket, facin’ a drivin’ snow-storm, and all the while prayin’ to the Lord to hev the wind change by the time she turned to come back home.”

The plan made for the trip was fulfilled without change. It is probable that Colonel Warren was rather more pleased than disappointed at finding no trout with the fly, the spoon, or the net, although the water was deep and cold, and at one end there was a great shoal with water plants, carrying, as his glass showed, plenty of minute crustacea. He could recognize the one-eyed water-flea (*Daphne cyclops*) and shrimp (*Gammarus pulex*), and he studied many others which he could not identify. He mourned over his ignorance, but John consoled him.

“What more do you want to know? The fish’ll eat ’em. You’ve seen ’em before in trout I’ve cut open for you.”



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Plainly, it was the accident of the subsidence of the waters long ago that left no native trout trapped in this pond. "John, you may carry up here from the river this summer one to two hundred trout. Next summer we will test it, and if they are growing fast we will bring up a lot more, and in two years somebody can have sport." This was work that the Colonel loved more than he loved fishing.

It happened that the camp was located by a bunch of young spruces, and that the whole structure, roof, walls, and poles, was built of spruce, and this was naturally a topic at the evening housewarming.

"Spruce is the curse of the woods," said John, "on the part of its makin' men greedy. They come first and cut for lumber all the big spruce that's sound and over ten or twelve inches thick at the stump. Then after a few years they find they've forgotten somethin' and they come back for pulp wood to make paper, and they cut what's left. Then the dead tops dry



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out and the fire comes and kills the hard wood. The lumbermen are just like bass. Put black bass in a small lake and in a few years they 'll eat up all the minnies ; in a few more they 'll eat up all the trout ; and in a few years more they 'll eat each other up, and you have the water left ; and if they could take the water along with 'em they 'd do it. I reckon that bass and lumbermen and hedgehogs all go to one place when they die, but they are too dinged slow a-dyin'."

"Of course you are wrong, John," said Colonel Warren, "but you always come out right. The wealth in these woods has been terribly wasted, but the people were ignorant and did not know what they were doing. They are usually more careful, nowadays. Does it occur to you that we, too, are wasteful? In peeling the bark for the camp we have just built, we have killed spruce to the amount of four or five thousand feet, board measure. Spruce has been the one great valuable crop to be har-



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vested. It has taken more than one hundred years to produce it, that is, as it grew here naturally. A twelve-inch spruce tree is at least a hundred years old. A great many of them die before they grow to be two hundred years old, so you see that if a crop of spruce is not cut it is wasted. If they would take the big trees only, there would be a profitable crop to cut at intervals of about fifteen years. Spruce grows faster, nearly twice as fast sometimes, when the trees have been skilfully thinned out, or when other conditions are favorable. This makes an estimate of growth deceptive, if you count, in an end section, the rings which show the yearly growth in any one tree, as you can count them on the end of one of the ten-inch logs in the walls of this camp. You may perhaps find that one of those ten-inch spruces has fifty rings and that another one has a hundred rings. Mr. Gifford Pinchot found good reason for believing that generally North-woods spruce thickens an inch in eight years. Beech and maple



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grow more slowly. Professor B. E. Fernow finds many that increase an inch in ten to fifteen years, while yellow birch grows nearly twice as fast.

“ Since the white pine has gone, red spruce is probably the most generally valuable building material left in the country, and it is altogether the best pulp wood. On most of the acres in the Adirondacks it is worth many times more than the land, the hemlock, and the broad-leaf trees all put together ; so, of course, they are going to take out all the larger spruce. The uses of civilization demand it, but if the cutting is not recklessly done, less than one-tenth of the shade is taken, the rest of the trees are benefited, the downed tops and the young growth about them give cover and food for deer, and the woods are lightened and made more beautiful for the sportsmen. All things work together for good, unless the lumbermen are pretty bad.”

“ The Colonel’s right,” said George. “ You find more deer now in the slashin’s than any-



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where else, and they git fat and git more to live on through the winter, so they don't winter kill. I remember findin' and countin' thirty dead deer in one spring-fishin' season, but now I don't find nearly as many as I used to. They are fat, and John lays it to the feed they git in lumbered country."

"I wish I could trust your memory, George," said Colonel Warren.

"So do I, Colonel. I kin jest barely remember somethin' about your first deer."

"I believe George is right," said John. "I've traveled over these woods ever since the War, all times of the year, and 'specially when there's snow-shoein' and in the early spring. I always see sick deer and starvin' deer and dead ones. Of course the deer ain't so plenty as they used to be, but they've been increasin' late years and in the slashin's they are fatter, and not so many of 'em winter kill."

"Did you see the Colonel kill his first deer, George?" said Hardy.



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“Not to say see,” said George. “I thought I heard a few dozen of the shots, but the Colonel says my memory has weakened, so of course it has.”

“Then you may tell your dream, George,” said Colonel Warren.

“The Colonel was a dream when he first come. He ’d been in the War while I ’d been lumberin’ in Canada, and I got my first job here awaitin’ on him. His clothes and cap was all made out of one piece, soft and smooth, brown-yellow, I call it — jest the color of a rotten stump. Everything was fitted to him and must have cost a hundred dollars. He had a patent on rolling the tops of his long stockin’s toward the inside, ’stead of havin’ an outside roll, so when the lower ends of his knee-pants was buckled over the roll, the stockin’s stayed up without garters. He was pretty ! and I used to look at him and then step out into the woods and laugh all alone by myself. He had a patent single-shot rifle and carried



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his catridges loose in his left-hand pocket; said he could shoot ten to the minute and hit at four hundred yards. I ast him how far that was, and when he said it was about seventy rod, I had to step out in the woods and laugh to myself.

“I had two dogs that had never run a deer, but, as luck had it, they were good. I had luck, too, in settin’ the Colonel on the runway at the mouth of the creek, and I left him a boat, so he could ride down to camp when he got through waitin’ and missin’. Then I took the dogs, on the chain, up the mountain, a-lookin’ for fresh tracks. In an hour or so I had started both dogs and was pickin’ gum when I heard him open, and keep on raisin’ the ante about every ten seconds. I did n’t begin countin’ until he had fired a good many shots, and, anyway, my memory is n’t good. Then it was quiet for a spell and I went on pickin’ gum, until his battery opened again and there was more fast shootin’.



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“I was rested and it seemed about time to work down hill and git a chance to laugh. I happened to strike the river half a mile below the mouth of the creek and saw the boat comin’ toward me. When it come near I changed my mind about the Colonel. He was a blooded sport. The little twelve-foot boat was piled with hair and hoofs and horns and dogs. The dogs was fightin’ to set on the biggest deer, and the Colonel was kneelin’ behind, a-paddlin’. I would n’t have known him, for he ’d lost his cap and was smeared with blood from his brown hair to his russet shoes. It did n’t seem right for a hundred-dollar suit to be treated so, but the Colonel’s looks was really improved. I did n’t laugh at him, but I swung my old hat and yelled, and he roared, and the dogs bayed and begun fightin’ agin and nearly upset the boat. After that we had a good deal of camp work to do and the Colonel saved his story for the evenin’. He kin tell it now better than I kin remember it.”



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“Your memory is all right, George, in this case, except that my cap was not lost ; it was in my pocket. After George showed me my watch point I looked and listened for hours, or minutes, so intensely that every grasshopper was a deer and every squirrel was a drove of elephants. I had never heard so many unexplainable sounds and I was so fearful that a deer might pass me unobserved, and make me a laughing stock, that I soon had a thousand-volt tension in my eyes and ears. I could not stand it, so I crawled to the high bank at the mouth of the creek, where there is a gravelly pool below the rift, and I was much interested in watching some large red-bellied trout. They were slowly sawing forward and back and sideways over the gravel bottom. I could see them nosing the larger stones out of the way and then, with their tails, dusting the sediment from the gravel, leaving white places. Occasionally they would quit work and fight each other. I did not then know that these were male trout, cleaning the spawn-



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ing beds, putting the house in order for their wives, who would come later.

“While I was watching the trout a tall insect began a peculiar operation on a spruce log near my head. He had wings about the size of the caddice fly, and four or five legs about half an inch long. He clinched all his toes on the spruce bark and sent down a shaft, like a cambric needle, and drilled a hole. At first I thought his drill was revolving, but I got my magnifying glass on him and saw that it was a reciprocal twist — a screw to the right, nearly one turn, and then another to the left. He drilled three holes for me while I held a watch on him. Then I carefully cut out a section of the bark and found that he could drill a hole three-eighths of an inch deep in three minutes. He furnished a pretty exact pattern and model to the inventor of the steam drill. I believe he was one of the *Trichoptera*.

“I was dissecting him and examining him, and had forgotten all about deer, when I heard a



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rustle back in the woods and saw something that looked like the comet of '61. It was glinting through the trees like a streak, and I shot at it. There was more streak and I shot at it again, and kept on shooting, I don't know how many times, until there was no more streak and no sound. Between shots I had been running to get nearer the deer and to keep out of the black powder-smoke. I kept on running until I came upon a two-pronged buck that was very dead. I tried to get him on my shoulders, but he was too heavy. Then I noticed that a good deal of his weight seemed to be inside of him, and I remembered George's speaking of having 'skun out' a deer, so I 'skun him out,' but it was a chore. It did not occur to me to take off my new coat, and, being inexperienced and very eager, I naturally absorbed a good deal of that deer. Nevertheless my bungling work seemed to reduce his weight about fifty per cent, so that I shouldered him and carried him to the landing.



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"I had just got him in my boat and was going to wash up, when, whish! another buck broke out through the alders and came racing toward me. I don't think I saw my sights when I fired then, for he was almost upon me. I blazed away generally, and the buck dropped dead. It was my day."

"I have been trying," said Hardy, after a pause, "for good photographs of deer, and I have been thinking that you had the chance of a lifetime, when the second buck was coming almost upon you, if you had had a camera instead of a rifle."

"No reason why you should n't hev both," said George. "Tie a little camera tight and well back on the under side of the barrel, with buckskin thongs, take aim, push the button, and then shoot."

"I have had nearly uniform failures so far," said Hardy. "That is, I have not succeeded in getting a thoroughly satisfactory near-by picture out of more than a dozen fairly good op-



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portunities. Strange to say, I have come nearer to success with a camera mounted on its tripod than with a hand-camera. I set up and level the camera at the edge of the pond ; then trim it with boughs, and sit down behind it waiting for something to come along. I thought, at first, that this would be dreary, but on the contrary, it is exciting. I find that by a quiet pond or on the river there is always something going on. A fox came in opposite me and worked for perhaps a quarter of a mile along the beach, in and out of the bushes and in the edge of the water. He was too far away for photographing, but I got a good idea of the way he passes his time, of his alertness and watchfulness. I think that he caught one frog ; but I had no field glass with me.

“ And why should a big deer be afraid of a measly little fox ? A few minutes after the fox had gone, a deer came out of the woods and I was ready to take his portrait as soon as he showed his whole body at the edge of the water.



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He was nearly out when he had a spasm. He made three leaps back toward the woods and struck a stiff-legged attitude, with his head and nose as high as he could raise them. He whistled a shrill sneeze that seemed to rasp his pretty nostrils. He ran, making a short loop back in the woods, and came out just above. He stamped the ground with his right forefoot and whistled again and again. It was abject terror, and yet he had seen nothing alarming, for the fox was long gone; but I suppose the smell of the track was associated in his mind with some kind of danger. When he finally went away, he ran with no caution. He broke twigs and crashed through tops for as far as I could hear such sounds.

“In using the camera, I have been mightily interested in the way green forest leaves drink sunlight. Photographs in the dense woods on the brightest days need one to two seconds’ exposure with a full opening of the lens, or a proportionally longer time for the smaller open-



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ings. This is many times longer time than is needed in any other shade, and I like to think it is an example of the correlation of forces; that light is taken by the leaves and perhaps converted into power to pump the sap, or perhaps used as a chemical agent in the making of timber and bark. I do not know surely, for I am getting the woodsman's fondness for learning things from seeing, and not from books. The dreamy theory rounds out well when you consider how easy it is to re-convert the timber into light by burning it."

"You can git tanned with biled hemlock bark," contributed George.

"I have noticed," said Hardy, "several instances of a peculiar habit, if it is a habit. A doe comes from the woods without hesitating or looking around carefully, until she is in plain sight in the open. Then she studies the whole lake, looking apparently over every foot of the beach. She looks directly at me for a while, but if I keep perfectly still she turns to some-



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thing else, and presently studies me again, until she is quite satisfied and puts down her head to take a drink. About this time, or shortly after, the buck boldly walks in and, without any hesitation, drinks and feeds on the tender plants. Once, while the doe was doing her five minutes of videtting, I saw a little flash of light a short distance back in the woods from where the doe had come. By watching there for a while I made out the buck's tail. He was standing in safety, lazily flicking at flies with his tail, apparently waiting for his mate to take all the risks of determining whether or not it was a safe spot for eating and drinking, and when it was so determined he stepped out with a lordly, confident, protecting air. The doe seemed to be grateful and proud of his coming. To her the old coward was a hero."

"Neither of them was a coward," said Colonel Warren. "Both were timid and cautious, as all good woodsmen learn to be, but the buck will fight well when he must. I met an Indian



## GEORGE'S MEMORY

boy last summer selling black-ash and grass baskets, woven with a good deal of skill and with some taste. I asked him if he had made them.

“‘No; woman make ’em.’

“‘Then, who gets the money, you or the woman?’

“‘Old man; he gits it.’”



## A CHAPTER OF ACCIDENTS

**H**ARDY had acquired some power of observation. As he traveled alone, he saw so much that he thought he saw all there was to see, and was unconsciously becoming proud of his dawning sense. Sitting in the stern of a boat, with John rowing him, he had a feeling of elation whenever he was able to say, "There is a deer!" But, as often occurred when John, with a turn of his head and a keen glance forward, replied, "There's two of 'em, both does," he was mortified. He was tempted to lie and say, "Of course." This temptation to small lying was one of his discoveries, and he sometimes thought that his character was not yet formed, his moral sense only partly cultivated, when a distant object was pointed out to him and he hesitated to confess, the devil prompting him to say, "Yes, I see it."



## A CHAPTER OF ACCIDENTS

He was muscular, and the apparent strength of woodsmen or guides, carrying a pack, or under a sixty-pound boat, was a mystery to him until he learned that skill was more important than muscle. He was pleased at finding that his careful bringing up and thorough physical training counted for something, and that, as he learned the woods, he could do and endure more than men who had not been so well cared for — if it were not for the accidents. At first he was rarely without a cut, a bruise, or a strain, and these were still too frequent. John advised him to learn how to be careful by watching the habits of the wild animals. “They know these woods better than we do,” said he. George warned him as they were going over some rocky ledges: “Step careful; these rocks were throwed in careless. Nobody took no pains with ’em.”

Eternal caution was not a bore to him; it was an exercise of skill, and distinctly a pleasure, but he was hampered by a lack of knowledge.



## THE LOVERS OF THE WOODS

The woodsman knows the root, or rock, or log that is slippery ; one look is enough. It is not instinct, it is knowledge that tells him where a charred log with sharply pointed branches is hidden in the briers in burnt ground, and his marvellous way of choosing the best going in rough country is simply the result of a great fund of information about little things, acquired by experience and not capable of being taught by words. The good woodsman of course goes slowly up hill and down hill, and fast where the going is easy, and watches for head room for his pack or his boat, as well as for good footing, but this care and watchfulness require only a small part of his attention, because he has acquired the habit of seeing at one glance and of printing everything notable on his memory.

When the party started down the mountain from the double camp, the packs were lightened and Hardy offered to carry a boat, but George was positive that he needed his boat



## A CHAPTER OF ACCIDENTS

over his head to protect his complexion, especially when going down hill. John was also reluctant, but yielded to Hardy's courtesy with a warning: "Remember you're in a trap when your head is under a boat with a wood collar close 'round your neck." He always tried to heed these warnings and he knew the dangers; but on a strong, erect man the weight of a boat rests lightly when the yoke fits the shoulders. Going down the slopes, ahead of the rest, he had occasional warnings when the boat was not perfectly balanced and he felt its stern touch the ground behind him, but it is hard to be always careful, and he yielded to the temptation to go faster, until finally the stern caught and held him for a moment as he was stepping over a log. He took a few quick, unthinking steps forward to recover his balance and heard a miserable sound of breaking as he saw a spruce horn pierce the shell of the boat in front of his head.

The grief of a child is probably more poignant



## THE LOVERS OF THE WOODS

than that of a man, and a young soldier wastes more time than an old one in vain regret. Hardy put down his boat, and looked at the rent in the beautiful hull. He wanted to hurt himself. He pressed back into their places the thin fibres of white pine and longed for the conditions of two minutes ago, just like a child. He heard George coming, heard him put down his boat and stop near him without speaking. George was filling his pipe and admiring himself for having clung to his own boat. Colonel Warren came up and sat on a log while John made a careful examination of the rent, and finally broke the silence :

“ Might hev been worse.”

“ How could it have been worse ? ”

“ No rib broken ; only the shell, but that ’s bad enough. I don’t see how we can fix it in the woods.”

There was a shrill note in Hardy’s voice as he asked : “ Why don’t some one ask how I did this fool thing ? ”



## A CHAPTER OF ACCIDENTS

"No need of that," said George. "I knowed you had n't stopped for a rest soon as I saw that little flick of paint on the spruce horn."

"Sit down and fill your pipe, my boy," said Colonel Warren, "while John finds a way. I never gave up to a broken reel or fly-rod or anything else lost, missing, or busted, except a carry-boat. I suppose, John, it would not be really sportsmanlike to wad some underclothes in that hole?"

"No," said John, thoughtfully, "sure there's a better way."

As they neared Wilderness camp, John quietly asked Colonel Warren :

"It might n't be that you have adhesive plaster in your pack?"

"Always, and rubber cement ; and there ought to be a rubber boot-top under the eaves of the camp. We are thinking the same way, John."

"How easy!"

All the splinters were carefully pressed into place, or pared down, and the varnish was



## THE LOVERS OF THE WOODS

scraped and roughened, inside and outside, around the jagged hole. Two rubber patches were secured from the leg of an old wading-boot, and the cloth lining was peeled from the inside. A coating of rubber cement was put on the boat and on the patches, and allowed to dry for an hour. After a fresh coating with cement the patches were pressed on. The repair was firm, smooth, and water-tight, and lasted through the season, until the boat was taken in the fall to the shop, where the builder dove-tailed in new strips.

There is often a first vulgar impulse to laugh at an accident to another person, and woodsmen, who spend much of their time in solitude, are probably most prone to it. Among kindly people it is quickly followed by anxiety to lessen the mortification of the one who has had the misfortune. In the evening, by the camp fire, three men, each in his own way, were doing what they could do to lighten Hardy's spirits. George made an effort :



## A CHAPTER OF ACCIDENTS

“Billy Drew come out of the woods in the spring, years ago, with a back load of furs, and they made him rich. He must have got more ’n a hundred dollars for ’em. Then he went back and brought in a load of tanned buckskin, and his wife made moccasins and gloves and sold ’em. He did n’t do a stroke of work all summer, and I sot ’round with him, evenin’s, whenever I could. Toward fall he told me he had a big scheme, and he ’lowed he ’d sell his trap-lines and winter-camp to the right man who ’d appreciate ’em. Of course I was the right man, and when he showed me the place and the lines I was pleased. I could see where marten worked along the hemlock ridges, and the rock ledges where I knew I ’d get fisher, and there was plenty of mink sign in the wet places. The camp was built just right for winter. It was tight and hed a little door to it, and was roomy enough for two men to crawl in.”

“What did you do with all that extry room, George?”



## THE LOVERS OF THE WOODS

“Kep’ it for my dog, John, and he was good company. He never interrupted me, all winter, when I was a-tellin’ him stories.

“One end of the little camp was against a big boulder, and that’s where the chimney was. The fire by that rock through the evenin’ made it hot enough to keep the camp warm nearly all night. The early part of December I went in, and of course I wanted bait for my traps, so I stepped back about eighty rod from the camp and felled a balsam. I left it quiet for a few days and then went back over the ridge with my rifle to see what had happened. The deer was standin’ so clost around that felled tree that I could n’t see much of it. Their sides was a touchin’ each other. They looked like cattle ’round a haystack, and I s’pose there was more behind ’em waitin’ for a chance, but I did n’t bother to look. They went away pretty soon, all but one buck that stayed, for bait for my traps. I skun out the deer right there and had to make two trips to camp to



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carry him in, for he was a good one, and the queerest thing was that I forgot all about my rifle and left it leanin' agin the balsam top.

"Next mornin' I went back after it and was steppin' along, quiet like, when I saw fresh bear sign, and the biggest track I ever see. It was fresh ; it was dinged fresh, and that big bear was right where I killed the buck, and he had with him, right under his eye, the only rifle within ten miles. I set down to think about it, and was goin' to fill my pipe so 's to get an idee, but I did n't do it, 'though the wind was right. I crawled along, careful, to see what was goin' on. Pretty soon I could hear him, workin' on what was left of the deer. I thought he would eat what he could and then drag away the rest, and as he was makin' a good deal of noise, I kep' workin' closter. When I saw him he had his back to me, and I kep' on workin' in. Pretty quick he saw me, and, instead of runnin' away, he rared up and looked at me, unpleasant.



## THE LOVERS OF THE WOODS

"I'd got in pretty clost, thinkin' when he started to run I'd sprint for my gun and everything would be pleasant, but his settin' up and darin' me to come on, and gittin' ready to come my way instead of goin' his 'n, made it bad. He acted as if he knew he was bigger 'n me, and I could n't help wonderin' if he knew about the rifle. We looked at each other quite a spell; he a-keepin' up a low growl and me a figurin' on a birch crotch where I thought perhaps I could swarm up. Pretty soon he begun eatin' again, but I could see he was n't swallerin' anything. He was fakin', so I felt better and turned on my eyes fiercer, but kep' still and did n't altogether give up the idee of the birch crotch. Then he weakened a little more and began backin' away, but draggin' with him some of the insides of the deer. When he was out of sight in the bushes I reached my rifle and felt better. When I got a chance to put a bullet in his shoulder he was some distance off and a-rackin' along through the woods at a pretty



## A CHAPTER OF ACCIDENTS

good gait. He went somethin' like a half a mile after that; I a-follerin' him, and nearly out of lead by the time he was quiet.

“He was the biggest bear and the fattest bear I ever see. I'd heard that bear's-ile was worth ten dollars a gallon, and of course the skin was a beauty, and so of course my fortune was made and Billy Drew was mighty foolish or mighty kind to give up such a chance and let me into it. I worked over him nearly a week, for he'd made it a long carry, back and forrads to the camp, but I kep' him froze up and all safe. The skin was so heavy with fat that it took me half a day to work it into camp. I filled the little camp full with the skin and the fat, that I expected to get enough ile out of to make me rich. Then about New Year's I snow-shoed out home with seventy pound of fat, and my wife tried it out and filled every bottle and can in the house with bear's-ile, and that 's all I ever got out of that bear.

“The January thaw come on, and it was nearly



## THE LOVERS OF THE WOODS

a month before I could work back through the soft snow to the camp. I knowed I was near it before I could see it, for I could wind it ; so I did n't come any nearder, but just gethered in a few traps and went home.

"In the spring I went out to the drug stores and they all told me bear's-ile was n't worth anything any more, because ilin' hair had gone out of fashion. So I bought a lot of small fancy bottles and put ile in 'em and had red and gilt labels, 'Genuine and Guaranteed Pure,' put on 'em ; and went 'round recommendin' bear's-ile for rheumatism and consumption, but never sold a bottle. I recommended it for ilin' shoes, but people would n't take to it, on account of the smell."

"You was n't so much to blame," commented John, "except on the part of leavin' your rifle out. I don't see how you could 'a' done that, way off in the woods all alone."

"'T was n't that," said George, "'t was not knowin' that hair ile had gone out. A man



## A CHAPTER OF ACCIDENTS

has to know a mighty sight to deal with people outside and make anything out of 'em. If I had n't left the rifle out I 'd never seen the bear."

"Of course," said John, "a man never ought to have an accident in these woods; they 're no use, but they come quick and sometimes you hardly know what 's happened, even when you think you 're careful. There used to be an old camp, half a mile from here, the roof broke down with the weight of snow, and all grown up to briars and pin-cherry. The Colonel did n't like it, called it a 'blot in the wilderness;' so I went there, when snow come in November, to burn it when it was safe. It was slow burnin', and I was usin' my axe to get the logs together so they 'd heat each other. I was alone and in a hurry and was careless, and swung the axe into a pin-cherry crotch just behind me. It hung in the brittle thing just long enough to drop back and split the calf of my right leg.



## THE LOVERS OF THE WOODS

“ I always claimed that pin-cherry is the meanest tree in the woods. It starts in, in a wind-fall or a clearin', and chokes out young birch and maple. It grows fast at first, and lays out to be a good tree, and makes everything 'round it grow spindlin'. It is n't good for much, even for firewood, and when it's done all the damage possible, it dies; but it stays there, black and brittle to catch an axe. It's just like a bass.”

“Or a lumberman, or a hedgehog,” said Hardy.

“ No, not so bad as that, but just plain bad.

The blood come strong and I was pretty weak and tired by the time I got the arms of my shirt tied around the leg, with a stick through the wrappin', twisted tight enough to choke the flow. When I had crawled a while, I had to stop and tidy up. The stick was a little too long, and it and the shirt trailin' behind my back leg rassled with the witch hopples, and made it bad goin'. I was near here when I remembered somethin'. The Colonel has a way of hidin' out what's left of a bottle of whiskey,



## A CHAPTER OF ACCIDENTS

and I had noticed him looking at a birch stump a few rods out. I got there and dug under the root and found a bottle. I pulled the cork, and things looked better."

"Only four or five ounces left in that bottle, I think," said Colonel Warren. "That is my obvious for hiding, in order to satisfy and stop the fool hunter."

"An' I think I saw you takin' notice of the big hemlock log below the spring?"

"Yes, John, there is a better bottle there."

"And the turned-up spruce root, on the other side of camp, with a spike that shows ten foot high, ought to be a good landmark?"

"You have taken the third degree, John."

"There's others," said John.

"There are several others," said Colonel Warren.

"I'll put an axe in my leg, soon as this party goes out," said George.

"The minister who was here two years ago learned of my childish practice," said Colonel



## THE LOVERS OF THE WOODS

Warren, "and when he went out he told me in mysterious whispers that he had left two flasks hid out, and that I was welcome to them if I could find them. He quivered and looked about cautiously as he spoke to me about it. The edge of hypothetical iniquity is, to some mild persons, like a precipice that they feel drawn to peek over. It did not take long to find the first flask. Of course he would not go far from the trail, so I stood still and imagined myself to be a minister. I got quite in the spirit of it, and as soon as I had done so, walked to his flask without error. I tasted his liquor and never looked for the other flask. I am convinced that he is a temperate gentleman."

"Your stump bottle was good," said John. "It made a wonderful difference, right away. I crawled into camp and made a fire and biled a couple of towels for about an hour. Then I cut 'em in strips and made a good job of bandagin', and slep' right through the afternoon and



## A CHAPTER OF ACCIDENTS

night. I put on fresh bandage in the mornin' and went home easy."

"The best work you did," said Hardy, "was remembering to boil out the towels."

"And the stump," said George.

"It was good work all the way through," said Colonel Warren, "sportsmanlike and good woodcraft. There is always a way out of trouble in the woods, but some of us are foolish. A good many years ago I was in the woods, with George, floating for deer. The lake was considerably more than a mile across, and toward morning we found a deer in the marsh at the head and brought him in. My little boy, six years old, was in camp and he wakened as we were hanging up the deer. The day was breaking, the lake was very beautiful, and as I had an errand to the other side, I took the boy with me in the carry-boat and rowed across. When we started to come back, I paid out a trolling line and passed the rod to the boy in the stern. Presently a good fish struck the troll and pulled so



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hard that little Russell's strength was not equal to it, and he partly stood up to pass the rod to me. I also partly stood up to reach for it. I was careless. The boat tipped and nearly filled and then righted. A forty-pound carry-boat is a good ship when it is dry on the inside. When it is full of water it will float only a few pounds more than its own weight, partly because of its metal trimmings.

"I instantly placed each hand on opposite gun-wales of the boat, and, straightening my arms, raised my body free and gently balanced out in the lake, and clung to the bow stem. Of course, in balancing out, I completely filled the boat with water, but I kept it right side up and hoped that, swamped as it was, it would sustain the boy and also allow me to bear a part of my weight on it while I swam and pushed it along. This did not work. Russell's end of the boat sank until the water rose to his chin, and the whole thing was unmanageable. I treaded water and tended the boat while I was soothing and en-



## A CHAPTER OF ACCIDENTS

couraging the plucky little boy to keep steady and work forward to the centre and sit on the bottom. He behaved well and things looked better, for the boat would just carry him, and not a pound more. My hunting-clothes and boots were heavy and the water was cold, but I swam and pushed as carefully as I could, aiming for the point of the island. It was slow, terribly slow. I saved my strength in every possible way, and began to speculate on how long I could work in the cold water and heavy clothes. I certainly could not reach the island, but I kept going, and while encouraging the boy to keep still and, at intervals, to scream at the top of his voice, I used the fewest possible words and the least amount of breath.

“A numbness began at my feet and crept gradually up my legs until they were almost useless. I swam now mostly with my arms, and at every second or third stroke pushed the boat carefully ahead with one hand. It was plain that I could not swim to the island and that, even if George



## THE LOVERS OF THE WOODS

heard us, he could not reach us in time to help me. I therefore gave Russell final precise directions ; trying to give him the impression that I was simply going away after help. I wanted to say good-by to him and give a message to his mother, but this should not be done. My pains were so intense and I was so nearly helpless that it needed no courage to let myself slowly sink. It came as a blessed relief. It was almost a disappointment, after I had sunk, to find that my feet touched bottom.

“ We had barely reached the edge of the shoal and were in a trifle over six feet of water. I thought that I was dying and the hope that the footing gave was only a languid stimulus. It was the thinking of the dear little courageous boy that gave me enough pluck to thrust my head again above the surface. A few more sinkings and a few more thrusts brought me to wading ground.

“ ‘ Are you on bottom, papa ? ’ ”



## A CHAPTER OF ACCIDENTS

“ I had enough strength to answer, and to push the boat slowly to the island. I lifted the boy out and said :

“ ‘ Russell, say “ Thank God ! ” ’ ”

“ ‘ Thank God, papa ! ’ ”



## JOHN'S CAKES

“**I**T’S jest as I told you,” said John, as he cheerfully passed to the out-door breakfast table the twentieth plate of cakes.

“Sometimes your appetite is above the everidge, but it settles back. I thought it ’d be so from the way you all slep’ after comin’ down the mountain, so I mixed two pounds of flour, and it’s a-goin’, but there’s plenty.”

“The cakes of John,” said Colonel Warren, “are not made by any one else in any camp or in any kitchen. They are light; as a vehicle for pure maple syrup they rival the sponge. They are resilient; their restful light-brown surfaces seem to come scarcely in contact. Only two more, John, and I am done. ‘Wouldst thou both eat thy cake and have it?’ Yes, when John mixes the batter there is always enough. They are moist, yet not too moist, and always tender and good. They —”



## JOHN'S CAKES

“ — stick to the ribs, I ’m a-tellin’ you,” interrupted George. “ Your fly-rod ’ll work better on the few dozen cakes you ’ve pecked at than on the hardtack you had in the war. When the Colonel’s leader fouls and climbs trees, I ’ve learned to lay it to the feed.”

“ I wish, John, that some time you would show me how to make cakes,” said Hardy.

“ Sure I will — some time,” answered John.

Hardy was reminded that he had many times asked the same question and had the same answer. To Colonel Warren the question and answer had acquired the familiarity of years. He knew all the ingredients ; he might have learned them by differentiation, if in no other way, for whenever, in the vicissitudes of camp life, any were missing, John mentioned it and repeated it, again and again, in the way of apology. He was tender of the reputation of his cakes. George wanted to know ; he needed this accomplishment in his business. He rarely asked questions ; he used his eyes and never forgot



## THE LOVERS OF THE WOODS

what he had seen once. Many a morning he had exhausted his pretexts for being near John during the mixing, but too often John's back would unaccountably be turned to him, and yet it was so naturally done as not to arouse suspicion, until, as George once described it to his wife when he had again failed to bring home the recipe she had often asked for, —

“Says I to myself, I'll spot the dinged thing if I hev to crawl between his legs when he turns, so he'll swivel over me. So I tended him for half an hour; reachin' 'round him for a cup, lookin' over his shoulder, droppin' on the floor for a knife, handin' him the milk can, which he said he did n't need jest yet, doin' everything to be sociable and clost. Twice he told me to go to the spring for him, but I was ready for that and hed every kittle in camp filled beforehand. He was worried about the fire, but I'd thought of that, and hed all kinds of dry wood where I could reach it and drop it on without movin' from my tracks, while my head was



## JOHN'S CAKES

turned full 'round over my shoulders, a-watch-in' him. He did n't seem to be restless, but he did n't get any furwarder ; all the time busy and never gettin' ahead, but we was both gettin' hungry. Course he had his coat on, for when he 's ready to get breakfast he 's ready for church, and I was so busy watchin' his batter pail that I did n't notice, till all at once I see there wa'n't a ding thing left on the table. He hed some melted butter in the bottom of the pail, and he grabbed the flour can and struck off in the woods. Said 't was too warm by the fire. Then I see his pockets bulgin' with eggs, surup bottle, milk can, bakin' powder can and everything we hed to cook with. I follered him, for John is always so soft-like you'd never 'spicion him, and, besides, he said he liked my company, when I ast him. But he kep' a-goin', and when I sot down on a log to fill my pipe he went out o' sight. I thought about it a spell and then worked back to camp, and there he was a-bakin' cakes !''



## THE LOVERS OF THE WOODS

“John,” said Colonel Warren, “answer me. What do you put in the pail first, when you make cakes?”

“Nothin’,” answered John. “You have to put your butter on to melt first; and you must be careful to have it melt slow, so ’s not to burn. And you don’t need to use the freshest butter you ’ve got. Old butter ’ll do, if it ain’t spoilt, and it won’t spoil if you keep it in the spring, where it ’s cool. And I ’m a-thinkin’, Colonel, that after breakfast George and I could split a few balsam into halves, and wall up the sides of the spring, — sheet-pile it, so ’s to keep the drift out and make a deeper pool to dip from.”

“John, that won’t do; you are blinding your trail. We were speaking of cakes. Twenty years ago we had a talk on this subject, and although I do not think you intentionally misled me, nevertheless, in my cockiness, I went home firm in the belief that I knew it all. I often spoke of John’s cakes when our cook



## JOHN'S CAKES

sent in pale, leathery disks that stacked up about ten to the inch thick. My offer to go in the kitchen and instruct the cook was declined, first by Mrs. Warren, and later by the cook, when I insisted on making the offer direct to her. Strangely enough, this tended to make me more firm in the belief that I knew how, and I spoke to the neighbors about it, and became known as the man who knew how to make cakes that were thick, light, sweet, and healthy. I had quoted from Dr. Marston's essay on ripe peaches and applied it to my cakes : ' They can be eaten in enormous quantities, without injury, and sometimes with positive benefit.' They were ' my cakes ' now ; they were John's no longer, and although I had never made them, they had become to me a pleasing entity.

" There was to be a children's frolic, ours and the neighbors', in our kitchen on Christmas afternoon, and I was to make cakes for them. I prepared for it the evening before, by look-



## THE LOVERS OF THE WOODS

ing up my fishing record where I had notes of my talk with you, and by doing some hard thinking. I also studied the cook-books so as to learn what to avoid, and I tried to move around the kitchen range with the air of a master. This is important in making cakes as well as in trying a case before a jury, and I still think that my cakes would not have been so very different from John's cakes, if I had not forgotten the baking-powder. The children ate them until their mothers enticed them away, and I hope their ailments were not beyond the average of Christmas nights.

"But, John, you are growing old ; I am growing old ; and we alone have the secret. It should not die with us : let us develop it now. That is, you explain and I will write."

"There ain't any secret, Colonel, except that the butter must be melted careful, and I'll be pleased to show how I do it — some time — but I ain't gifted to rightly talk so you could write it down."



## JOHN'S CAKES

"I think, John, that in a decent interval after you have overcome your reluctance, your language will not be unfit for publication. After a quarter of a century of hiding you may need a minute to get used to the glare. Begin slowly, but begin now."

"You melt your butter," said John.

"How much butter?"

"About the size of an egg, and you stir in two eggs and a teaspoonful of salt. Then you crumb up a thick slice of stale bread, but not the crust, and let it soak in the pail with a cupful of water, and when it's soaked you stir in three big tablespoonfuls of condensed milk and two tablespoonfuls of syrup and two more cupfuls of water and your butter, eggs, and salt. Then you stir in flour, about a pound, until the batter is nearly as thick as molasses. Before you bake, stir in two teaspoonfuls of baking-powder, and your griddle has to be snappin' hot and kep' so. It's easy; anybody can do it,"



## THE LOVERS OF THE WOODS

said John, and there was a note of regret, or relief, in his voice as he said it.

“Easier, I sh’d think,” said George, “to do it in camp, than to go off in the woods and work from your pockets. Do you happen to know that there ain’t a trout in camp and there’s one left, that you touched up in the spring-hole, Colonel?”

“Are the provisions low?” said Colonel Warren. “Strange what a pleasing stimulus that condition is to the sportsman. We like to believe that we are unwilling to take the life of a game animal unless it is necessary, but we work hard and wait long to make it necessary. We really like to kill, and, when you think of it, the whole science of hunting and fishing is simply that of killing with the least possible discomfort and danger, limited by a few Marquis of Queensbury rules, made to prevent too fast killing and to prolong the agony. Like assassins we lie in wait for a deer, or steal after



## JOHN'S CAKES

him like a sleuth hound and shoot the harmless, beautiful creature from ambush. We con over flies, spoons, and gangs, or sit by baited buoys and study the habits of trout, in order to bring death to their happy homes at meal time. Of course we bar nets, traps, and salt licks, and try to make assassination a fine art, but it is brutal, and I am inclined to think the instinct for it is a revulsion from high civilization, a desire to get out of its attenuated atmosphere into primitive conditions, and work with our hands for food and shelter. Clarence King's merry thesis, 'Civilization is a Nervous Disease,' has truth in it, although this brilliant gentleman probably did not care a rap for that feature when he developed it. The specific for this disease is to wait on yourself, to hunt, kill, and cook your own food, and — "

"The trout of which we was speakin', Colonel, is good medicine, and you can't be always on-lucky. Best cure for misfortune is to marry agin."



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"I am not forgetting him, George," said Colonel Warren, "but it is not necessary to fish all the time, and early morning is not the best time."

"Sure it is n't," said John, "and if you can spare us for an hour, George and I could sheet-pile the spring with split balsam and have things more comfortable."

"Could fix it better 'n that," said George, "all by myself in less time. There's a beech, just beyond, that come down last fall. Of course its heart has rotted out by this time. I'd split a piece out of it and make a trough, and hev runnin' water so 's to set a pail and let it fill while I'm smokin' my pipe, 'stead of havin' to stoop and dip. It's queer how quick beech rots at the heart and keeps sound in the sap after you fell it. I had a contract to cut and haul twenty cord, guaranteed sound. After I'd get a load on the sled I dasn't take my eye off it for fear it 'd rot while I was drawin' it. I never hurried in my life, except then, and



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when I got the last load in I hurried the man out to view it the same night."

"This is all new to me," said Hardy. "The beech is such a buxom tree. It seems so clean, wholesome, sound, and healthy."

"And yet 'it rots itself in ease on Lethe wharf,' said Colonel Warren. George is right, but of course he did not mean to include the variety blue beech, which is a useful timber tree. But we are dawdling on Lethe wharf. John and George might fix the spring while we tidy up the camp; then we'll put up lunches and part to meet again toward night."

There is a charm in all phases of trout-fishing through the open season and it is well not to be bigoted, although we may have strong preferences. After the ice goes out, the sleepy trout is not at his best; he is yawning and recovering slowly from his half hibernation; he is not lively in snow water; he does not take a fly, or anything else unless it is drifted near to him; he nibbles gingerly; he won't play or be



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played; he is not fat, but he is good, and the fisherman has also had a hard winter, and is longing to wade the stream and to eat fried trout. It is the vulgarest fishing, but perhaps it is the most fun. In May, or thereabouts, the fly-fisherman may gorge himself with sport, when the trout go on the shoals in the ponds, or on the rifts in the river, to race about in swift water and rest in shallow pools. They are scouring off the winter coating, we commonly say, but are they not, rather, looking up their old haunts, noting the changes, and satisfying themselves that water still runs down hill, just as all of us like to do in the spring? They are plenty and get-at-able. The brutal fisherman's thirst for blood may be quenched for a while, and the gentle sportsman can pick and choose. With falling water and warmer days and nights, our friends in the stream drift to deep water and the pools at the mouths of spring brooks, alert for food and comfort and wary of danger. They are fat and at their best



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in every sense. The fisherman needs to plant his finest darkened leader straight and quiver the flies gently, to deceive the trout, which sees with eyes that, sleeping or waking, never seem to close. If he could only hear and smell, the fly-rod would not be known and the gill-net none too sure. Everything in Nature seems to be fixed and balanced just right.

In the evening, Hardy and John were in camp and settled, with supper waiting for the others to come in, when Colonel Warren's voice, roared at the edge of the clearing :

“ ‘The air nimbly and sweetly recommends itself unto our gentle senses. The Heaven's breath smells wooingly here !’ What have you got for supper, John ? But pause for a moment while I unbuckle the cover of my pack-basket and George scrapes a little of the bark of the mountain ash ; and cut some sugar, John, and bring cold water from the spring. Whoop ! This has been a white day and we'll mark it ! ”



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“Two-pound ten-ounces, full,” whispered George, as he laid on the curled-birch log a beautiful fish for Hardy to study and admire.

“And you just ketched him,” said John, as he noted the unfaded colors.

“Jest landed him; ben ketchin’ him a good while,” said George.

“‘Swing low, sweet chario-ot; comin’ for to carry me home,’” sung Colonel Warren, as he bent over his pack.

Of course, the true fisherman does not fish for fish. His happiness comes from the outing and the chance for skill. Good luck or bad luck must have nothing to do with it, but there is a spontaneity in his contentment when the big fish comes.

“If I’d hed my way,” said George, “I’d ’a’ gone this mornin’ and anchored by that spring-hole and stayed right there, and taken no chances, so ’s to be ready when he was willin’ to come. Of course, if the Colonel had ’a’ let me, I’d gone ashore and dug a worm, but he



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would n't hear to it. I stood the boat off while he drewed his flies over the pool twice, and then he reeled up and said it was too bright and the water was too flat, and we 'd leave the boat and walk up to the Elbow and spend the mornin' fishin' the holes comin' back. We got some good ones and had lunch and the Colonel took a nap in the shade, while I set and smoked and worried about the big one. Come four o'clock and I could n't stan' it, so I built a punkey smudge, two or three steps up the wind from where the Colonel was sleepin.' Lord, how the smoke did waller over him !

"Course he got uneasy and set up, and I told him how they used to throw stones in a spring-hole, to stir up the trout and make 'em run out half-scared and come back livened up and habited to things fallin' among 'em.

" ' Stun 'em out ! ' says I.

" ' Better smoke 'em out,' says he.

" Pretty soon he said, quiet like, as if it jest happened to occur to him, that we might go



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to the boat and try the big spring-hole for a minute before goin' back to camp; but he studied his fly-book for half an hour before he 'd move. He took down the leader, with three flies he 'd been usin', and put on the finest brown leader I ever see, and only one fly, a No. 8 Montreal. Fish took it, most every cast, some good ones, but he let most of 'em go. I moved the boat away, while he changed to a little black hackle, about No. 14, and it was beautiful to see him fire that little punkey up to the mouth of the creek and draw it down at the edge of the eddy. And it went out o' sight, jest sucked down, and the Colonel struck slow. We had him; and the Colonel did n't say a word for half an hour, except once he whispered: 'You know where the log is, George!'

"I never saw prettier handling of a boat," said Colonel Warren. "The tackle was, I think, rather light for that sized trout. We had to take time and be careful. And now, my boy,



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what have you been doing? You brought in fish for supper, and I see you have some beauties left, nicely packed in brakes by the spring."

"John and I concluded to fish the river below again," said Hardy, "and to walk some distance down the bank before we struck in, so as to get to the pools below. The fish were not biting well, but it was very beautiful, and we got a few before lunch time. John carried my camera, and I have got — I hope I have got — some good pictures. While we were eating lunch, John told me that we were within half a mile of Cross's Pond; that it had no fish in it, but of course I wanted to see it. We went there, and I made the worst break that I have made since I went away from my rod on the edge of the burnt ground. I left my camera at the river, instead of taking it with me. We walked part way around the pond and sat down, and pretty soon a doe came in opposite, perhaps forty rods. She came with-



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out a sound, slowly, not like a cat, not like anything else but a deer; just slipped in a quiet, smooth glide, and drank and nibbled. Of course she looked around and studied the whole pond, but she seemed most anxious about the direction she had come from. She kept looking back."

"Course I knew she hed a fawn back in the woods, soon as I see her actin' that way," said John, "and then I thought about Mr. Hardy's camera, for she'd come to stay, and would work 'round nearer to us. And I'd left the dinged thing at the river, 'though I might have known we stood to see deer, any time of day, at Cross's Pond. Ef I hed it to do agin, I would n't 'a' done it."

"Yes, John said that she was probably worrying about a fawn back in the woods, and directly the fawn came scampering in. It stood stiff-legged and stared at its mother with its head turned comically, so that one of the big ears was partly over the other one. Then it



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turned down the beach, kicked up its dainty hind legs, took a few high leaps, and stopped stiff-legged again. It bucked, like a broncho, going straight up into the air and lighting squarely with all four feet close together. It was a continuous performance, a little, but not much, like a lamb's gambols, for it was graceful. The mother waded breast-deep in the water for grass-roots and lily-pads, but watching the fawn and seeming to coax it. Several times it put its toes into the water and quickly sprang back. Directly the doe went in deeper water, and swam slowly toward us, often stopping for a tender lily-pad and to look back very earnestly at the little one.

"Suddenly, with a rush, the fawn sprang into the water, tore in and made it fly, and in doing so, fell on its knees and wet its pretty little nose. It was plainly frightened at what it had done, but its mother was ahead, so it kept going. It churned and pounded the water with its fore feet, and soon got too high in front and was



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frightened. It bleated, calling for its mother, and when she swam alongside, the little rascal immediately climbed on her back and ducked her. When she came out from under, she cautiously kept a short distance away, working toward us, but with her head over her shoulder watching the fawn. About the middle of the pond the fawn got in trouble again; got too high in front, and apparently had another panic. The doe swam near him, and he threw his fore-feet over her back a second time; but she was wary, and kept her head above water. Then, for the first time, she made a sound, not a bleat, but a cooing sound, such as pigeons make, and it seemed to soothe the excited little fellow. He swam more steadily, but not at all smoothly, for he appeared to get his legs tangled and lose his stroke. Sometimes his neck was high out of water, and sometimes his nose was buried, but he finally came ashore, just twenty-one feet from where I was sitting on a balsam log. I paced it after they left, but



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they did not go for several minutes. The fawn trembled so that it could scarcely stand, while the mother licked it and kept making the cooing, crooning sound. It was a very tired, meek-looking fawn that slowly followed its mother into the woods. I have the picture in my mind. It was not over-exposed or under-developed, and it will never fade, but I can't show it to any one else. I feel as John does, about leaving the camera: If I had it to do over again, I would n't 'a' done it."

"I understand," said Colonel Warren, "that you have been observing two specimens, a mother and a child, *Cervus Virginiensis*; and these are the tender, loving, lovable creatures men breed dogs to chase, and invent deadly rapid-fire guns and soft-nosed explosive bullets to mangle and kill. Gentle, kindly sportsmen are we! Let us go to bed."



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“**T**HERE is no one thing,” said Hardy, “that has so impressed me in my short experience in the woods as has the fact that a man needs so little here. No, that is not quite right ; it is that it is easy to get every comfort in the woods, because so much has already been done by the Almighty and is ready to our hand. Each thing that grows here seems to be adapted to the needs of other living things, and all for us. The Earth was made for man, and there is a God. I don’t want to preach, but the perfect ordering of natural things fills me with awe and has made some of my beliefs certainties.”

“I never happened to know a good woodsman,” said Colonel Warren, “who was not devout. He is liable to go a step farther and be superstitious, for, however long and minutely



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he studies Nature, he finds so many things unaccountable that he is apt to believe in supernatural intervention. 'When a man's barkin',' says Billy Drew, 'he learns what the moon kin do. In the full o' the moon, hemlock bark 'll fall off if you look at it, but when she changes, the bark 'll squeeze to the log tighter 'n a weasel.'

"I almost wish I could be superstitious, it is so picturesque, and it stops a man plumply before he gets beyond his depth searching for reasons why. I don't know why whirlwinds come to tear great swaths and make desolate windfalls among the beautiful timber-trees; or why briers grow in burnt ground. I am glad to know why spruce bark cannot usually be peeled later than July. In the spring the sap is feeding a soft film between the bark and the wood and we can easily get roofing for camps. The chemical process of changing this film into a cylinder of hard fibre is an extremely interesting and beautiful one. It is the spawning season for tim-



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ber, and the bark is again cemented to the new ring of wood.

“I am glad to guess why hemlock, spruce, pine, and balsam do not shed their leaves all at once, but keep a stock on hand alive through the year, to make an everlasting cover for the rocks; and why the broad leaves of birch, beech, maple, and ash are shed once a year and whirl in and work together to make rich soil on the hard-wood flats and slopes; and why witch hopple and moose maple bestir themselves to make cover wherever too much sunlight gets in between the hard-wood tops; and why water washes soil to the shallows in the ponds so that lily-pads, deer-grass, mosses, rushes, and weeds can grow for food for deer and support for the insects that trout feed on; but facts, rather than guessed reasons, interest the woodsman.

“Black flies come precisely when trout are careless as they go on the rifts, about the first of June. John says there would n’t be a trout



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left in the river in five years, if it were not for black flies. They certainly keep a good many fishermen out of the woods, and often compel a man to go ashore and heal his wounds before his basket is filled. John claims that they like ‘fish-hogs’ better than decent men, and it is likely to be true that brutal men, who like to hurt and kill, are most afraid of pain.

“Notice, too, how well the punkeys do their work when the black flies tire and turn gray in July and lose their power for good. The little midget thrives in the shade; he can’t do good work in the sunlight, or in the night, or at any time in the year except in the spring-hole season. In the cool of the evening, when trout are at supper, ten thousand millions of these infernal gnats, the size of a needle-point, ‘lost to sight, to memory dear,’ too small to be seen before they are felt, establish themselves about a quarter of an inch apart all over the body, and each one digs a hole. One bite does not hurt much, but the cumulative effect is a frenzy, and



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he is a stolid man who can clean out a spring-hole in the edge of the evening when the punkeys are defending the trout there. It used to be an Indian torture, and it is said that a man, stripped and tied to a tree in a punkey hole, soon loses his mind, and dies in one evening. It seems to me believable.

“ Comfort means exactly the same here as it does at home, provision for a lot of small necessities and luxuries that we have become accustomed to, and the good woodsman gets them with the least possible amount of work. There are defective persons whose idea of camping is a squalid, unrighteous, and not sober life, which they call ‘roughing it.’ When you learn how, it is always possible to have dry clothes in your pack, a tight roof, a good fire, the best food and the best cooking in the world, good society, and plenty of water for bathing. What more do you want, unless it is a library ? Nothing, I think, and books in the running brooks serve for the present.



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“There are others who over-provide, but they err on the safe side and are on the right track if they are ready to learn. They bring a rain coat, while a rain cape is better and weighs only a quarter as much ; they bring wading-boots, when an extra pair of stockings is better, and the boots weigh five or ten pounds, a considerable straw to break the carrier’s back ; a heavy toilet-case, when a pocket comb and the few necessities suffice and weigh less. A man needs something like fifteen pounds of personal belongings for a few days in camp, but when he does not know, it is better to take fifty pounds than to be uncomfortable.

“I invited a friend to meet me in camp last year, and as he was inexperienced in fly-fishing and I was over-supplied with tackle, I told him to bring only a comb and a tooth-brush and I would do the rest. I walked down the trail to meet him, and observed that, in order to disencumber himself so as to shake hands with me, he carefully transferred his comb from his right



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hand to his left hand, which was also holding the tooth-brush. It was a warm day and as we walked in my friend took off his cap. He was bald-headed, extremely so, and of course I always knew it, but forgot it when I sent the facetious message which he had taken seriously. I was at first mortified, for he was interrogative in the matter of the comb, often so during the first day in camp. He said he did not own one and had not owned one for years, but as he knew nothing of the woods he had provided himself with a strong one and was extremely anxious to know its uses in woodcraft. I at last succeeded in convincing him that it was desirable, even necessary, to comb out his flies after using them, until they were thoroughly dry. I quite enjoyed watching him at work, evenings, with a tool to which he had been long unused, for I disliked to admit that I had caused him to make the error of over-providing. Still, bringing too much is a good fault; he might have needed a comb."



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“But,” said Hardy, “the woods supply everything. If he had needed a comb I have no doubt John could have made one.”

“I made one once,” said John, “out of horn-beam, worked it out careful and polished it with scourin’ rush, the kind we use for cleanin’ knives, and it lasted me a hull winter.”

“They come ready-made here,” said George. “A trout’s back-bone is good enough for me, unless there’s comp’ny comin’, and then I spear a sucker.”

“I have been puzzled,” said Hardy, “to understand how you put up in this camp the row of wooden pins that are about an inch thick and six or eight inches long; those that we hang coats, hats, and pack-basket on, inside the camp and put our rods on, outside the camp under the eaves. I can see that no auger holes were bored for them.”

“That,” said Colonel Warren, “is one of the most important of the small conveniences in camp, and the easiest to provide. Cut beech,



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or maple saplings in lengths three inches longer than you want them to project. Sharpen one end to a long, tapering wedge. Make a nice job of this sharpening and the pins can easily be driven three inches in any soft-wood log. Neatness and good order are prime necessities for comfortable camping, and with plenty of these wall-pins it is easy to be tidy. You are right, my boy, in concluding that the woods supply everything, that is, everything in reason. Ask now for anything you want that might fairly be needed, and you shall have it. Of course you will not ask for effeminate luxuries, or means of idle dissipation."

"The Colonel," said George, "don't want his stumps meddled with, Mr. Hardy."

"I think," said Hardy, after a pause, "that if I wanted to make a raft I should be very much bothered to do it without either nails or strong rope, and, if you please, I accept your challenge and ask John to get some."

"The Colonel just told you," said John, "how



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to make tree-nails. Hard wood, sharpened, drives easy in the spruce or balsam logs you'll probably make your raft of, but the trouble is they're apt to split the small poles you use for crossbars to hold the logs together, and your raft is likely to spread in swift water. Better use good rope, and that's almost ready made. I'll get you a length of strong rope and then you'll know where it's kep', always ready and waitin' for you."

John went to a bunch of second-growth birches and showed Hardy how these slender, tall saplings were running a race for their lives. The lower branches were feeble twigs; all the energy was devoted to gaining height, each trying to over-top and capture the sunlight and kill the others. One of them, only, could possibly survive to maturity, and when the fittest wins his race the others near-by must slowly die. Mr. Pinchot classes the birch as a tolerant tree, and he knows, but I never happened to see a young birch very near to an old one, although young



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beeches, maples, and spruces seem to love that protection.

John narrowed the competition of the birches by choosing a sapling an inch thick at the butt, and about twenty feet high. He did not cut it down ; he bent it towards him as he trimmed all its twigs and branches, and then began slowly twisting its tender top. It was easy to twist the recent growth, partially separating the fibres and making a strong, pliable rope. When he reached tougher wood he held the sapling firmly in his left hand, while, with his right, he bent and turned as a crank the part above. As he so worked down toward the butt it became more and more difficult to twist and separate the fibres.

Hardy remarked : " I think I see your finish, John."

" Not yet, not till I get to the ground. There 's sixteen foot of rope in this saplin'."

John cut a short stick, killing off another one of the competitors, and ingeniously wrapped



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and tangled it in the kinked rope already made. This made a powerful twisting-bar, and, as he turned it, it was beautiful to see the line of bursting bark and rending grains slowly travel down toward the root. As the sapling writhed under pressure it exuded sweet sap and the air was filled with the pungent odor which reminded Hardy of a familiar sign in a country tavern : " Birch beer tastes queer — sold here." As the bar was twisted, the maltreated sapling kinked in curious folds and wound itself on the bar, so that, when it was finally cut off at the root, it remained a queer mass of curves, clinging to the weapon that had killed it.

" You 'd never think that was sixteen foot of good rope," said John, " but unkink it from the bar and you 'll find it 's strong enough for a harness trace."

" I 'll never unkink it," said Hardy. " It is a fine wall ornament and I shall keep it as it is, for it means something."

" You can't always tell what you 'll need," said



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George, "specially when you start in a hurry. You remember when the minister was here five years ago? We put out the dogs on a Saturday and he missed the only shot he had, and come Sunday, of course he would n't let any huntin' be done. Drawin' pay for Sundays and all, I did n't mind settin' still, but I kep' thinkin' of one of my dogs that had n't come in, and 'lowed I'd step out in the woods a piece and look for him. I had an idee of strikin' the camp up North Elby way, for there was a party there runnin' dogs and my dog might 'a' led into it. They was no need of carryin' lunch, for I knowed one of the guides there and of course he'd ask me to stay to dinner and I'd get a change of feed. But when the minister see me bucklin' on my belt and chain, he was all for goin' along. I hed calklated on goin' alone and bein' more sure of gettin' ast to dinner, and perhaps a little mountain ash, and havin' everything comfortable, but the minister spoke about the 'virgin wilderness' and the 'holy temple on



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the Sabbath day' and lit out. Nothin' could stop him.

"We made the camp about one o'clock, jest as I figured to, but the party was gone. They'd left that mornin', for the ashes was hot, and they were good campers, for they'd burnt all the food that was left over, so 's not to attract mice and vermin; but it made it bad for us. The only thing I found was a little pork grease, and I gethered a hatful of mushrooms and fried 'em, but the minister spleened agin it; called 'em toadstools.

"Then we struck off about four miles to Indian Clearin', where I'd heard shootin' the day before, and perhaps my dog had pulled in there, and perhaps whoever was there would ask us to eat with 'em. I never see a worse-lookin' party than we found. They said no strange dog had come in, and of course I did n't believe 'em and began lookin' 'round, careless like, but they was unpleasant and seemed to want to get rid of us. So I looked for the minister, to take



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him away and start for home, and there he was standin' near the cookin'-fire. His nostrils flickered as he smelled the coffee, and when he looked at the patridges, all split and flatted out ready to brile, he jest druled ; but they never even ast him if he had a meouth on him."

" It 's queer," said John, " how many ministers do come to these woods. I 've seen a good many in my time, more 'n a dozen, I reckon, and gen'lly good ones. It 's probably the best of 'em that comes, but I don't know. I have n't seen one outside since I was a boy. One September I was a few miles above here on the river with my boat. It was about two o'clock and I had stepped back on the hard-wood flat to where the Colonel had a cache under the big maple by the hemlock stub. There 's a spring brook there and I was cookin' a meal of vittels, when I heard two rifle shots in the line of my boat, and of course I stepped out to see what was goin' on. Two men were restin' on the bank opposite. They said they 'd seen my boat,



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and noticed it was fresh grounded on the bank, and thought they 'd find the owner of it by firin' a couple of shots, so 's to ask on which side the trail led down the river.

" I brought 'em over and did n't ask questions, 'though it was puzzlin' to locate 'em. Course I noticed they stepped in a boat right and knew how to take care of themselves, 'though they were strange to this country. Their shoes was good, but the strings had been broke and knotted. Their pants was tore in a good many places, but mended good, except a few places fixed with safety pins, so it was pretty sure they 'd come from Indian River way, through the big burnt ground. They were gritty and did n't ask for help, but I could see things wa'n't altogether pleasant, so I asked 'em to take a meal with me.

" Seemed as if I could hear their teeth click when they accepted, so I stepped across to the Colonel's maple for some more provisions. I dug out his bottle and put it with a tin cup by



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the spring where they was washin' up. Then I could see they was all right, for they took only about an ounce apiece. You can find out a good deal about a man by the way he treats whiskey. They were tender of it and showed they took it only when 't was needed.

"After dinner the older man told me he used to come to the woods when he was young. He 'd been a missionary to Turkey or somewhere way off, most all his life, and, since he 'd come back, wanted to see the woods again. They 'd started in to walk across, guidin' by a map, and of course they 'd had some troubles, but he made light of 'em. When they 'd come to wide water that they could n't get 'round, they 'd made a little raft for their clothes and packs, and swum and pushed across. They were sandy and good, but they had been out six days, and provisions was low. The old man asked if there was a camp where they could stay over Sunday, so I told 'em all about the Colonel and his camp, and how glad he 'd be,



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when he come up in the spring, to hear from me that his camp had been of use to people who loved the woods. I told 'em they was all right, and would be well fixed after about two hours' tramp; and that 's where I made a break, for, as it turned out, it was a good while before they saw Wilderness camp.

“The weather had changed while we was talkin', and I 'd been careless, not noticin'. It was growin' black, and south of west I could see a cloud risin' that looked like a bag of bluin'. I struck off through the woods fast as I could make it, for we had five miles to go. The ministers kep' up well. We could hear roarin' and crashin' ahead of us, and we had n't gone fur before the tops near us begun to whistle and moan, and I knew it would n't be long before they 'd begin twistin' and breakin'. We was on a ridge, and I wanted to get down where some high rocks would shelter us, but it was black dark, except when it was lightnin', which was most of the time. When I saw a



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birch, about two foot through, that had fell acrost a little gully, I dodged down by it and called to the ministers to come in and make themselves small. They crawled in careful, without a word. The old one was the coolest man I ever see in these woods. When a hemlock come down across our birch and broke in two, it lightened and I could see his face. It was shiny, and he was smilin'.

"A flurry of rain come and stopped, and the wind stopped, and everything was dead for a minute, before the whirlwind struck us. I never heard such a noise since we bombarded Fort Fisher — roarin', hissin', and snappin', with thud, thud, thud, as the big trunks struck the ground. It was a long time passin', and we were just about the middle of the path, where there was n't a big tree left standin'. We never got a scratch, but our birch was pretty well covered with tops. Then the rain come and it poured stiddy and was cold. I got dry curl off the birch and started a little fire and fed it



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with branches until it made light enough for me to work with the minister's little two-pound axe. It was slow, but I done it. The evenin' was gone and 't was late night when I got a fire the rain could n't drown. It lit up the windfall and we could see what had happened. "It 's wonderful how comfortable you can be a-standin' straight up in a pourin' rain before a hot fire. The old man asked me about the war, and I told him about our defeat at Drury's Bluff, where I was taken prisoner. I must 'a' made it a long story, for when I stopped, the young man turned the face of his watch to the fire and said it was Sunday. I asked the old minister if he would n't preach me a sermon. I had n't heard one since I was a boy. He seemed to forget about the rain, for he stepped to his pack and took out two leather-covered books, but he covered 'em up again and stood on the far side of the fire, a-facin' me acrost it. Then he said, 'Hymn number four hundred and fourteen,' and the young man sung with him :



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“ ‘ Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah,  
Pilgrim through this barren land ;  
I am weak, but Thou art mighty :  
Hold me with Thy powerful hand.’

“ I never heard such music, and did n’t know folks could sing so. They sung all the verses, standin’ there in the windfall, and the rain comin’ all the while. When they begun the last verse, —

“ ‘ When I tread the verge of Jordan,  
Bid my anxious fears subside,’

I found I was cryin’, not because I felt bad, but I seemed to be a little child again, and it was natural. Then he said :

“ ‘ The Lord is in His holy temple : Let all the earth keep silence before Him.’

“ He repeated Scripture word for word, and said prayers, sometimes kneelin’ and sometimes standin’. I knelt when he did, and when he come to the Lord’s prayer I remembered it and cried again, for I was a little child.

“ Before he begun his sermon, he said :



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“ ‘ For we must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again ; neither doth God respect any person ; yet doth He devise means that His banished be not expelled from Him.’

“ ‘ Then he stood, a-lookin’ at me acrost the fire, and preached. It was all to me, me all alone, and I could n’t take my eyes off him. I can remember a good deal of what he said, and I’ll never forget it. The fire lit up the downed tops, and he stood with his back to the felled hemlock, preachin’ a sermon to me through the hot flame. He glowed and shone and seemed to rise up tall in the firelight. He must ’a’ talked for hours, but I did n’t know it until he said, ‘ Let us pray,’ and we knelt down.

“ ‘ When I stood up and turned away from the fire, the rain had stopped, and it was sun-up. He was a good man ! ’ ”



## “HE CAME UNTO HIS OWN”

**I**T was October in the woods and Hardy's swinging steps were covering the miles of the long trail to Wilderness camp. The October maples had shone and glowed for weeks before the month that gave them their name, but now they and the evergreens were infrequent variants from the prevailing yellow, and this only when the wind was still. With each swirl the air was filled with yellow swarms of rippling confetti, as the leaves left the hardwood trees and floated in the open spaces. Shining through them, the light was dulled and softened and colored, and the pale-yellow monotone was continued by the carpeting of the ground. The dainty chemists had spent their lives making sound wood out of sunlight, and, faithful after death, they seemed to try to stay in the upper air and spray their lovely color on the landscape.



## “HE CAME UNTO HIS OWN”

Hardy enjoyed his steps and would not hurry them through the glowing forest, even though he had before him the meeting again with his dearest friends. As he neared them, he went more slowly, for as he thought of them he began to think of himself — a thing he had long and happily forgotten to do. He had worked as he had never worked before and had exuberantly enjoyed every day with John. There is never an idle time about a hatchery for the man who loves it. All the while there is something to think about, something to study and to do, and in this zealous work and learning Hardy had forgotten himself, the morbid man of a year ago who warped every thought with miserable consciousness. His life had a new birth, but his old hopes and ambitions were coming back to him as he drew along to the camp where the Colonel had finally enticed Mrs. Warren to come for a fall outing.

At Wilderness camp things were different. It was the Colonel's camp-fire conversation motto



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that, "ladies are always present," and even when he camped alone with George in the open air he dressed for dinner to the extent that his outfit permitted. George had an altruistic regard for the Colonel's habits ; he did not emulate them. In the spring he had made assurances of the tried value of the soft hat given to him in the fall : "I've slep' in it every night. It ain't ben off my head for a minute sence you went out." Nevertheless, there was a change in the near-by landscape that the camp had never before known. There was a newly made sleeping lodge at the edge of the clearing, and on the flattened log near it were neatly arranged articles new to the woods and not essential to the Colonel's comfort.

Mrs. Warren was sitting alone before the smouldering day-fire as Hardy came in, and it seemed to him that the dear old lady could never have been so beautiful at any time or in any other surroundings. Whenever Hardy felt conscious that she was dearer to him than any



## “HE CAME UNTO HIS OWN”

other woman on earth, he did not formulate the exception. He had a lurking sense of it, but the other one was younger and it was different — and hopeless.

Down by the landing Mary Warren was lingering to watch the clouds of yellow leaves that were being drawn into the valley of the stream and swept down it like flocks of migrating birds. She had been hunting for bear. She felt humanely incapable of killing a deer, unless it might be one who wanted to hook people, and she preferred to hunt for bear, very savage ones. She always intended to like practising with her rifle at a target, and she had often planned for a daily hour of serious banging until she could overcome the habit of pulling to the right, and become a dead shot. Meantime, this accomplishment must of course be unnecessary for close conflict with the desperate animal she was seeking. She knew she had courage, but it did not occur to her that she could not climb a tree. George encouraged her and offered ad-



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vice only as to keeping still and going slow, very slow indeed. He was willing to sit on a log and wait for her any length of time, provided only that it was between meals. There was no chance to talk during the still hunt, and she had half purposely stopped here before going back to camp in order to ask George a few questions, if she could arrive at them naturally and easily, and lead him to tell of winter-living in the woods. She was fond of information, general information, and as she looked at the stream before her she felt satisfaction in thinking that she knew why water runs down hill.

She had not told herself, definitely, why she wanted to know how a man who had been gently nurtured could live and enjoy living in the woods at all seasons. She wanted like information as to a woman, any young woman who was strong and skilful and not afraid of bear; who was prepared for great dangers and hardships from which she could come with renown



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— unhurt and comfortable. If she could get these two items of information, there was no doubt that she would be able to put them together and form an opinion as to whether such a man and such a woman could have a glorious and comfortable career in the wilderness — but she had not seriously considered thinking it out as far as this. It was not difficult to direct George’s attention to winter occupations, but it was less easy to keep him from wandering to incidents which to him were more unusual.

“Hatchery is too stiddy for me and there’s more to trappin’. When I was a boy I got more money — I thought it was more money — than I ever hed sence then, for two mink pelt, and I ’lowed I ’d walk out and have a ride on the cars. It was evenin’ when a train come along and the conductor was the shiniest man I ever see. He looked like a new-blazed spruce; a gold watch chain, a brass puncher and his left arm through the bale of a brass lantern. I ast



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him how fur he 'd carry me for a dollar ; and he said, seein' it was me, he 'd take me to the end of his run. I handed him a silver dollar and he flipped it up to the top of the car, and ketched it as it come back and put it in his left-hand pocket. Of course I was watchin' and wonderin', but I was n't askin' questions. By-me-by he come back and set down and ast me everything he could think of, and advised me always to be honest. He said he made that his motto, and that he always dealt square with the company and gave 'em a fair chance. Says he : ' Ef that dollar had ketched on the bell cord and stuck, it would hev belonged to the company. I always give 'em a fair chance.' "

" But, George, how do you catch minks ? "

" I generally don't. When they smell trap bait they come up, but not clost, and think it over, and most always they can see or smell a mark or a place that tells 'em a man has been there, and then they lose interest. Best way is not to touch the ground or anything near where you



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set your trap. Wade up in the stream and reach over, and if you want to do it jest right, you’ll always hev your hands greased with skunk-ile.”

“I do not seem to be growing fond of trapping,” said Mary. “What else is there to do in the winter?”

“Set clost to the stove,” said George, “and it’s handiest to hev your bed in the kitchen, and to hev your wood corded up in it, wherever there’s room for it.”

“Dear me!” said Mary. “It is time for us to go back to camp.”

It seems incredible, but it is true, that it was Mrs. Warren who discovered for Hardy that his ailment was gone and that his world was again waiting for him to conquer it. Of course it was known to John, who had noted day by day every step in the young man’s recovery of his voice, of his increasing strength of mind and body and of his self-forgetfulness, that he was, in John’s language, “a well man,” but he



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feared to tell him or in any way lead him to think of himself. For this reason he put a mighty curb upon himself and gradually stopped the boiling of herbs and the grating of roots and the making of things that were "good for" his patient. The habit of a lifetime is not easily broken, and John made and threw away a good many nostrums, but it was now more than a month since he had dosed Hardy.

It was dark when Colonel Warren came into camp, but his coming filled the whole timber opening with glow and sound and presence. He had left a buck hung up in the woods ; he loved his wife ; he loved his daughter Mary ; and he roared his appreciation of their being here with him, in the centre of the wilderness. When he greeted Hardy and knew of his recovery, the trees swayed and the earth trembled at his explosions of joy, until he partly disappeared in his mysterious pack to recover something fit to celebrate this great day of this great year in the life of the finest fellow that ever walked a trail !



## “HE CAME UNTO HIS OWN”

By the camp fire that night, charming as it was, Hardy could not stay. All who were dearest to him were there, but he needed to be alone. He looked back to the years of growing anxiety, to the year of despair and of recovery. He had learned in the woods from the works of God the lessons of self-help. His ship had found itself, and he seemed to walk on air as he went away from the fire down the silent trail.











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**THE LOVERS OF THE WOOD**  
**By W H Boardman**